

2.

**FAMILY BACKGROUND**

Charlot's unusual family background influenced his work. His subjects—especially the Mexican ones—contain an unusually high percentage of domestic scenes. Charlot himself referred often to his family in explaining his work, tracing his interests and tendencies back to his forebears. For instance, in his flyleaf blurb for his *Three Plays of Ancient Hawaii* (1963), he wrote of himself:

One constant unifies Charlot's varied output, his interest in so-called primitive cultures, perhaps inherited from Aztec ancestors. Most of his paintings are on Mayan, Mexican, Hawaiian or Fijian themes.<sup>1</sup>

The Charlot family seems to have shared the common French belief in atavisms, inherited family traits. Odette would speak often about how a person in one generation was just like someone in another. Charlot once laughingly said to me that he must be Jewish because he liked to walk with his hands behind his back.<sup>2</sup> Charlot's remark was characteristic of his thinking about himself: he saw a quality and traced it to part of his family background. He even designed his home in Honolulu in 1957 to be a reminder of the country houses he had known in France.

Jean Charlot's love of family is a key to understanding his personality, life, and work. The family into which he was born had the traditional European form: extended, many-branched, far-flung, and identified by class. The branches of the family were *bourgeois* 'middle-class,' or more precisely *grand bourgeois* 'upper middle-class,' and sometimes even rich. A number of them had country houses, and Frédéric Caplain, Charlot's uncle and godfather and a dealer in precious metals, would display his fine carriage horses. Although they had a slight connection through marriage to the aristocracy, they thought of themselves as staunchly middle-class and respectable. More unusually, the Goupil and Charlot branches were multicultural, stretching from Russia to Mexico. Despite the size of the family, its members were very aware of each other and largely bound by an active and strong affection. In the French phrase, they were *très famille* 'very family-oriented.' At the funeral of the widow of Charlot's great uncle, Gustave Goupil, in 1904, the announcement listed many of the family names, including Goupil, Caplain, Briçon, Palmieri, Robin, du Peuty, Canuet, and Bisson. When Lucie Goupil Robin died in 1966, my mother wrote Odette that my father "remembers her very well" (April 24, 1966). When we visited France without my father in 1955, his sister, my Aunt Odette Charlot, spent a great deal of the summer taking us to visit people of those names, who seemed to us Americans to be very distant relatives indeed. We were even taken to visit houses in which different branches of the family had once lived. In the same way at the turn of the century, Mexican relatives visited the Goupils and the Charlots in France, and when the family was ruined by World War I, Charlot and his widowed mother thought it normal that they should go to Mexico to live with and be helped by their relatives. Throughout his life, Charlot thought of the family as a base and even at times a refuge. He tried to maintain family ceremonies and was disappointed when the waiter at a French restaurant would not serve me: "Imagine. I can't give my son a glass of wine on his fifteenth birthday!" But the very importance of family meant that it was a responsibility that Charlot could not assume lightly in later life.

The following account of Charlot's family is based as much as possible on documents, but also includes family stories that I have not been able to substantiate. Those stories are however important as they formed the image of the family for its members.

## 2. THE PATERNAL SIDE

Henri Pierre Jean Charlot, Charlot's father, was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, February 23, 1860. His mother was Henriette Charlot, from Cussy Les Forges, Yonne, France, near the city of Avalon, who had gone to Russia to work as a *modiste*, a hat-maker.<sup>3</sup> Henri Charlot was given his mother's family name because he was illegitimate: in the *Livret de Famille*, the official family book of his own marriage, the line for his father's name is left blank and the word *mariés* 'married' for his parents is crossed out.<sup>4</sup> Henri knew the identity of his father and had mementos and papers that related to him. At Henri's request, the papers were buried with him, but some mementos—a photograph of Alexander III, original watercolors of Nicholas II and his wife—have been preserved. Henri's family had the impression that his father was connected to the Imperial court.<sup>5</sup> Charlot remembered one of the photographs of his paternal grandparents that was buried with his father:

I just know that when he died—he died in our house in St. Mandé—mother brought out a little bunch of photographs I had never seen before and I never saw again, of course, and one of them was the father and mother of my father. We put them in the coffin and sealed the coffin and that was all. His father was a guy in Russian uniform. Not knowing, of course, what the uniform signified in the Russian Army, I couldn't very well decide what status the man had, just that he was an impressive fellow with impressive sideburns and sort of a splendid uniform in the photograph. And his mother was very simply dressed, rather petite and very French. So, that's all I know. (Interview November 18, 1970)

When Henri was still young, his mother died in Moscow in one of the frequent near-epidemics of the time of what is described as either *variole* or *petite vérole* "small pox."<sup>6</sup> In one family story, Henri saw her body thrown from the window of their apartment to the street below to be carted away. The *Extrait des registres mortuaires de l'église paroissiale de St Louis des Français à Moscou*, dated 1894, states:

Henriette Charlot âgée de trente et un an [*sic*] est décédée à Moscou des suites de la petite vérole le 12 Juillet 1871. Son corps a été inhumé dans le cimetière catholique le 15 Juillet...

'Henriette Charlot, thirty-one years of age, died of the effects of small pox on July 12, 1871. Her body was buried in the Catholic cemetery on July 15...'

Twenty-three years after her death, either Henri or his father had Henriette reburied in a Catholic cemetery and raised over her grave an impressive monument.<sup>7</sup>

Henri's father continued to support him, providing him with an excellent education in Germany; Henri reportedly spoke six languages without an accent. His citizenship was French, and he had performed seven years of military service (letter to Arlette, August 26, 1977). Henri's father also provided enough capital to establish his son in the import-export trade, France–Russia–China and probably Japan, including silk and egg powder from China, matches from Romania, and furs from Russia. Three sample books of silk and various cloths and ceramics have survived in the family and are now in the JCC. Henri proved a successful businessman, traveling from France to Germany to visit his business partners and maintaining his contacts in Russia.<sup>8</sup> He would provide his family with an extremely comfortable life.

Henri also had a brother, or more probably a half-brother, of the same surname; he was probably the Pierre Charlot who signed Jean's *Acte de Naissance*. Both brothers bore the name Pierre, which descended from their grandfather, the father of Henriette. Charlot met him occasionally on the stairs leading to his father's office, but he was not made part of the larger family (Interview June 12, 1971). The reason was that the illegitimacy to which the brother was a witness would have disqualified Henri from the larger family, had it been known. For example, a first cousin of Charlot's had been excluded from the family because he had married a seamstress. Although my father talked freely—if initially with some embarrassment—of this illegitimacy to his family in America, Odette kept the family secret in France even from her daughter Arlette. When I made light of the illegitimacy in the early 1960s, Odette told me that revealing it would still damage her relationships with family members.

### **3. THE MATERNAL SIDE**

Henri Charlot married into the extended family he very much enjoyed: his bride, Anne Goupil, provided the family connections that were normal for a bourgeois of the time. But her own family was not typical of its milieu, being divided between France and Mexico since the 1820s. Mexico had long been a sporadically safe haven for European Jews, Latin Protestants, and chiliastic Franciscans, a situation that encouraged unconventional interracial and mixed-religion marriages. Pierre Nicolas Goupil (July 4, 1771–February 22, 1850), from Normandy, was the first to establish a connection with Mexico in or around 1820.<sup>9</sup> His second son by Marie Anne Adelaïde Simon (died February 12, 1859) was Joseph Victor Ferdinand Sénateur Goupil (March 8, 1806–May 4, 1884),<sup>10</sup> who was born in Rouen and died in Le Pecq, near Saint Germain-en-Laye, but apparently lived for considerable periods in Mexico, where he founded the family fortune.<sup>11</sup> In 1851, he and his family moved into what is now called the Pavillon Sully, completed in 1609, one of the remnants of the Château Neuf built for Henri IV at Saint-Germain-en-Laye.<sup>12</sup> The Pavillon is palatial with multiple rooms and enormous windows looking out over the Seine and a famous view of Paris in the distance. Outbuildings and extensive gardens complete the estate.

Two large photographs, probably from the 1850s, show Victor's large family with several servants on the lawn of the Pavillon; among them, his wife and young sons, Eugène and Louis, can be recognized. Victor has posed in heavy gardener's clothes prominently tending a large maguey plant in the middle of the lawn. He had every reason to be proud. He had brought from Mexico several *maguey*

plants, which he managed to grow around his property; the enormous plants excited interest and were illustrated in at least two prints.<sup>13</sup> French botanists debated the classification of the plants, and those at the Jardin des Plantes in Paris added *Goupiliensi* to their name.<sup>14</sup> Victor wrote a brief history of the plants for an article by E.-A. Carrière, “Agave Salmiana,” in the *Revue Horticole* of 1872:

...En 1853, je les...ai fait enlever de pleine terre à *Tacuba*, près de Mexico, où elles étaient plantées. Ces plantes avaient alors 18 à 20 mois, et mesuraient environ 60 centimètres de hauteur ; elles furent bien emballées et mirent cinq à six mois pour arriver au Pecq, mais à peu près toutes pourries ; on les éplucha feuille par feuille, et l'on parvint ainsi à sauver trois petits cœurs, d'environ 15 à 20 centimètres de hauteur, auxquels on donna tous les soins reconnus nécessaires. Dans ces trois s'en trouvait un à feuilles rubanées qui, malheureusement, mourut par suite d'accident. Les deux autres pieds furent mis en pleine terre lorsqu'ils étaient bien repris ; ils avaient environ 60 centimètres de hauteur.

‘...In 1853, I had...*them* taken from the open ground at *Tacuba*, near Mexico City, where they were planted. These plants were then eighteen to twenty months old and measured approximately sixty centimeters high. They were wrapped well and took five to six months to arrive at Le Pecq, but were almost all spoiled. We plucked them leaf by leaf and succeeded in this way in saving three little hearts of about fifteen to twenty centimeters in height, which were given all the care recognized as necessary. Among these three was one with striped leaves, which unfortunately died because of an accident. The two other stalks were planted in the open ground once they had recovered; they were about sixty centimeters in height.’

In the cathedral of Mexico City, on October 13, 1830, Victor had married Anna Benita Meléndez (also called María and Mariana, July 26, 1811–September 4, 1875), born in Mexico, who was half Spanish and half Aztec Indian, her mother, Maria Martinez, being pure Aztec.<sup>15</sup> From the Conquest, prominent European families had married into Aztec ones and were proud of their connection.<sup>16</sup> Charlot told Anita Brenner in the 1920s that “the colour of [her] skin is still commented on the Parisian side” (Brenner 1970: 303). This connection to the Aztecs was conscious and influential for the next three generations. I use the word *Aztec* because this was always the one used in the family. Today scholars prefer *Náhuatl-speakers*, referring to a number of different groups in central Mexico that shared variants of that language. However, our family always identified with the Mexihkah proper, the inhabitants of the Mexico City area.

Joseph and Anna or Maria were much loved in the family and called “Papa Nito” and Maman Nita.” Their eleven children increased mightily the reach of the extended family.<sup>17</sup> For instance, their tenth child, Mathilde Claire Ernestine Goupil (1851–1889), married Jules Briançon (1841–1911), connecting the Goupils with another very large family. They had five children, who had numerous children among them. Their third child, Alice Briançon, married Léon Harmel, the son and continuer of the work of the famous Léon Harmel, the Roman Catholic capitalist promoter of the amelioration of the

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condition of workers.<sup>18</sup> Through him, the child Charlot met the famous Harmel and was rather frightened by him; but he provided a model for a Roman Catholic who was interested in social issues, however paternalistically: unfair systems could not be corrected by private charities.<sup>19</sup> Most of these many uncles, aunts, and cousins provided the family society of Charlot's childhood and appear in family papers and correspondence. For instance, Paul Briançon (born 1901) was a childhood playmate along with the Mexican cousins.

But two children of Joseph and Maria stand out as important for Charlot: their second child, Louis Cyriaque Goupil (or Luis Ciriaco; June 18, 1834–December 15, 1926), was Charlot's grandfather; and their first, Charles Eugène Espiridon Goupil (December 14, 1831–October 24, 1896), was an essential influence on Charlot's development.<sup>20</sup>

Eugène was born in Mexico City and became the most prominent member of the family. He turned what seems to have been his father's fortune into an even greater one with businesses in Mexico and France, including a factory of prize-winning "Perles métalliques en toutes couleurs" 'metal pearls of all colors'<sup>21</sup> at Chaumontel, a large village about twenty miles north and slightly east of the center of Paris, on the route to Chantilly.<sup>22</sup> His own writings and the descriptions his friends have left of him witness to his extraordinary energy, decision, and largeness of view. Eugène also added to the extended family. On May 14, 1864, he married Augustine Élie (December 13, 1844–October 11, 1932)<sup>23</sup> and their children married into the families Canuet, Caplain, Laval, and Lemaire, all names that appear in Charlot's family history.

Eugène is historically important as the donor of the Boturini-Aubin-Goupil collection of Aztec codices and rare books, known officially as the Aubin-Goupil Collection, to the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.<sup>24</sup> The historian Charles Gibson calls it "the foremost single collection of native pictorial materials as well as the originals and copies of a number of native and Spanish written texts."<sup>25</sup> The collection is a monument to Aztec culture and to the French *Américanistes* or *Méxicanistes* who studied and promoted it. Lorenzo Boturini Benaduci, who was of French origin, made the initial collection in Mexico in the eighteenth century. The collection went through many vicissitudes until what remained of it was bought piece by piece in Mexico by Joseph Marius [sometimes, Marie] Alexis Aubin (July 18, 1802–July 7, 1891), a scholar, teacher of French, and Náhuatl speaker, who brought it to France in 1840.<sup>26</sup> He published some items of the collection, but then began to have mental difficulties, becoming paranoid and distrusting all but a few old friends. After losing his money in investments and fearing for his collection, pieces of which kept disappearing, Aubin decided to sell the collection, although he had planned earlier to give it himself to the Bibliothèque Nationale.

The key person in this transaction was Eugène Boban (March 10, 1834–May 2, 1908),<sup>27</sup> a close friend of Aubin and Goupil, who had himself known Aubin for more than forty years. Boban had lived in Mexico from 1857 to 1869 and from 1885 to 1886, becoming one of the most prominent French *Méxicanistes* or *Américanistes*.<sup>28</sup> In fact, his business, a factory for making cardboard boxes, disappeared at the time of the French Intervention, "car son fondateur qui était féru d'archéologie Mexicaine, se

consacra dès lors définitivement à cette science” “because its founder, who was mad about Mexican archeology, consecrated himself definitively to that science from then on.”<sup>29</sup> Boban had been the *anticuario* ‘antique dealer’ of Maximilian,<sup>30</sup> which may have been his initial contact with the Goupils.

Boban sold pre-Columbian artifacts to Goupil in 1888. Shortly thereafter, when the Mexican government appeared interested in Aubin’s collection, Boban explained the situation to Eugène Goupil in the hope of keeping the collection in France. Goupil’s factory at Chaumontel had just burned down, so it was a very bad moment for him, but he was characteristically decisive. Boban reports that Goupil instructed him to work out a price that would be fair to both parties. Goupil was aware that beyond the price of purchase would:

s’ajouter des frais bien autrement considérables occasionés par les publications que j’aurai à faire pour me rendre réellement utile aux Américanistes; mais il n’y a pas à hésiter, il faut que ces documents restent en France. (Boban 1891 volume 1: 12)

‘would be added even more considerable expenses caused by the publications that I will have to produce to make myself really useful to the Americanists; but there is no time for hesitation, these documents must rest in France.’

The agreement was made on April 11, 1889, and included all the works that had been lent from the collection and that needed to be recovered. Eugène spent much time and money over the next years finding and repurchasing materials that had been separated from the collection and adding new works; he pursued this activity even to the detriment of his business. He employed Boban as curator to help buy further materials and to organize the collection, which was in terrible disorder; Aubin had deliberately disarranged it in order to pass it through Mexican customs and further disorder had been introduced later. This work of Boban culminated in the great catalog of the collection in two volumes with an *Atlas* (1891). Eugène was anxious to make the collection accessible and usable before he and Boban died, so he had photographs made of items from the collection shortly after the purchase. Also, Boban began publishing materials: “M. Goupil a jugé à propos de faire compléter et publier ce curieux document sur l’histoire du Mexique” ‘Mr. Goupil has judged it appropriate to complete and publish this interesting document on the history of Mexico’<sup>31</sup>; “C’est encore un nouveau service rendu par M. Goupil à l’archéologie de son pays” ‘It is still another service rendered by Mr. Goupil to the archeology of his country.’

Eugène had declared his intention of donating the collection to the Bibliothèque Nationale, but unfortunately he died in 1896 without having signed the necessary papers. His widow was soon besieged with lucrative offers, but followed her husband’s wishes “Par piété conjugale et par patriotisme” ‘Through conjugal piety and patriotism’ (Réville 1899: XVIII), and the collection was donated in 1898:

les objets donnés formant une collection qui devra être toujours conservée dans son intégrité à la Bibliothèque Nationale, où elle sera cataloguée sous le nom de “Collection Aubin-Goupil.” (official document of donation)

‘the donated objects forming a collection that should always be conserved in its integrity at the Bibliothèque Nationale, where it will be catalogued under the title “Aubin-Goupil Collection.”’

Even before he bought the Aubin collection, Goupil had bought artworks and artifacts mostly from Boban that were exhibited at the 1889 Paris Universal Exposition and given in large part to the Trocadéro museum; his brother Louis reportedly donated items as well.<sup>32</sup> A large number of lesser works—including published books that were not needed at the Bibliothèque Nationale—was sold at auction (Boban 1899). However, much remained in the family. As late as 1951, a major auction was held in Paris of the “Collection E. Eugène Goupil” (document in the JCC):

ART MEXICAIN PRECOLOMBIEN

SCULPTURES EN PIERRE

Urnes Funéraires, idoles et objets divers en terre cuite

Colliers et amulettes en pierres diverses et coquillages

---

Tambour de bois – Etriers de fer

Poteries peintes ou vernissées des XVIII<sup>e</sup> et XIX<sup>e</sup> siècles

Catalogue illustré de la collection Goupil dressé par E. Boban

PRECOLUMBIAN MEXICAN ART

STONE SCULPTURES

Funerary urns, idols and divers ceramic objects

Necklaces and amulets in different types of stone and shell

Wooden drum—Iron stirrups

Painted or varnished pottery of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

Illustrated catalogue of the Goupil Collection prepared by E. Boban

The Aubin-Goupil Collection was of central importance in Jean Charlot’s life. He saw a number of manuscripts and artworks in his deceased great-uncle’s house at Chaumontel during family gatherings, as well as at other family houses including his own, and later studied the collection formally.<sup>33</sup> On December 27, 1976, Odette viewed an exhibition of Aztec art in Paris and noted on the back of a postcard that illustrated an image from the Goupil Collection:

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Je sors de la merveilleuse exposition aztèque qui m'a replongée dans tous les objets, manuscrits, documents dans lesquels baignait notre enfance. J'en suis toute émue. 3 heures de délectation sans aucune fatigue, même au retour. Mes vertèbres se sentaient dans leur élément de jeunesse.

I'm just coming out of the marvelous Aztec exhibition, which plunged me again into all the objects, manuscripts, documents in which our childhood bathed. I'm completely moved. Three hours of delectation without any fatigue, even on returning. My vertebrae felt themselves in their element of youth.

The knowledge he acquired from the collection was a decisive influence on his own art in France and then Mexico:

if my mural work was to shoot valid roots in this new soil. A youth passed among American archeological specimens eased the process somewhat, but my plastic experience remained mostly European" (Writings Related to *MMR*: Passages Cut 184/299).

His knowledge also provided an entrée into knowledgeable circles in Mexico, and enabled him to lead the Mexican Muralists to a greater appreciation of Precolumbian art. Eugène's accomplishment might also have given Charlot an appreciation for collecting historical materials, which he did throughout his life, leaving in his turn and with the collaboration of his wife the Jean Charlot Collection to the University of Hawai'i; Mexican scholars have called it the best archive of documents on early twentieth-century Mexican art history outside of Mexico.

If Eugène was the responsible, industrious older brother, Louis—Charlot's maternal grandfather—seems to have been the adventurous younger one. Although he apparently provided his family with a comfortable life—probably living largely from his inheritance—he did not achieve the fortune of his older brother, and his family felt that Eugène had not been entirely fair with his younger brother in money matters; a common enough complaint of poorer relations and not taken seriously by Charlot himself (Charlot, personal communication). An auction of the properties of Louis's father on April 25, 1891, lists considerable property in Paris.<sup>34</sup> Louis engaged in various businesses, including his father's clothing and jewelry store in Mexico City called El Cajon del Arco-Iris,<sup>35</sup> and was praised by a colleague in 1883:

vous avez des qualités d'ordre, de précision, et de connaissance des affaires qui ne se trouvent pas facilement, surtout quand elles sont jointes comme chez vous à une urbanité parfaite.<sup>36</sup>

'you have the qualities of order, precision, and knowledge of business that are not easily found, especially when they are joined, as in you, to a perfect urbanity.'

I suspect that Henri may have assumed Louis's business responsibilities. In any case, Louis was not able to halt the financial collapse of the family after Henri's incapacity; Louis was, however, very old at that time.

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Louis was better known for his non-business exploits. Louis was a famous *charro* ‘Mexican cowboy,’ and was photographed in his traditional costume.<sup>37</sup> His best known exploit was to *colear*, to throw a bull by riding up to it from behind, securing its tail between his leg and the flank of his horse, and coming to an abrupt stop.<sup>38</sup> A pack train license was issued to the twenty-two year-old Louis on December 7, 1857, and a photograph of that year shows him mounted in *charro* costume on his horse (documents in JCC). In one of his surviving letters to Charlot in Mexico, Louis writes:

Siempre pienso a mis paseos a caballo, a los toros. Cuando pienso que jineteaba y capoteaba a los toros que les plante[a]ba yo banderillas estando a caballo[.] (April 6, 1925)

‘I think always of my horse rides, with the bulls. When I think that I was riding around and making passes at the bulls with a cape, that I was planting ribboned barbs from horseback...’

Similarly, he writes to his daughter:

Con mucho gusto recibí tu carta que me intereso sobre manera pues me recuerda muchas cosas que hacia a caballo como jinete, lasando, coleando manangando, en fin la vida de un hacendado, que hacia yo casi los domingos al rededor de Mejico. (March 25, 1926)

‘With great pleasure I received your letter, which interested me extraordinarily since it recalls to my mind many things that I did on horseback as a rider, lassoing, throwing bulls by the tail, herding [?], in sum, the life of a large rancher, that I did almost every Sunday around Mexico City.’

Charlot’s surviving letter to Louis from Mexico emphasizes the exciting elements he knew his grandfather enjoyed:

Te escribo de Mexico, en un dia de elecciones. Hay muchos pistoletazos en la calle, gritos etc... pero uno se acostumbra a todo...Pronto regresaremos en Francia y charlaremos con tigo de las cosas de Mexico.

‘I write you from Mexico on an election day. There are many pistol shots in the steet, screams, etc...but one accustoms oneself to everything...Soon we will return to France and gossip with you about things in Mexico.’

In old age, Louis would keep up his skills by lassoing Jean and Odette while they were running around his living room (Charlot 1963: 179). In Paris, Louis was an aficionado of fencing and was depicted among the well-known members of the audience at a match (*L’Illustration*, May 28, 1892, No. 2370, p. 473). Among those Louis met through fencing was the society painter Carolus-Duran (1837–1917). A friend sent Louis a comic sketch with the note: “Crayonné par Carolus Duran dans une de nos séances de l’Ecole d’Escrime” ‘Penciled by Carolus Duran during one of our sessions at the Fencing School.’<sup>39</sup>

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A story passed down in the family illustrates Louis's chivalrous spirit. Louis was connected to the government of Maximilian as an archeological consultant. Teodoro Labadie describes him as: "mi tío Louis Goupil, que acompañó al ejército intervencionista como conocido arqueólogo" 'My uncle Louis Goupil, who accompanied the Interventionist army as a recognized archeologist' (1962: 16). Charlot wrote in 1925 that both Louis and his father Victor Goupil "were interested in this country to the extent of having done important archeological work" (draft of letter to W. A. Bryan, September 1925). Louis was also reportedly a secret member of the resistance. When his group plotted to kidnap the Empress Charlotte or Carlota while she was on her recreational carriage ride, he leapt into the way of the driver and warned him off in another direction. Far from being angry, his revolutionary organization recognized that he had acted as a true *caballero*.<sup>40</sup>

Louis's romantic verve and humor are apparent in a note he wrote in 1913. He recalls visiting friends in New York City in 1858 on his way back from France to Mexico at the age of twenty-four. At their request, he adorned a page of their visitors album with a poem:

Eh ! Qui pourrait compter les bienfait d'une mère !  
A peine nous ouvrons les yeux à la lumière  
Que nous recevons d'elle, en respirant le jour,  
Les premiers leçons de tendresse et d'amour.  
  
'Ah! Who could count the good deeds of a mother!  
  
We have hardly opened our eyes to the light  
  
When we receive from her, on breathing in the day,  
  
The first lessons of tenderness and love.'

He added a gallant piece of prose and comments in 1913:

J'ai donc fait des vers quand j'étais jeune? Pourquoi pas? J'ai bien eu un prix de chant ! Quant à mes vers je les trouve charmants et d'après cet échantillon, Jean ne m'arrive pas à la cheville. Attrape, mon vieux.  
  
'So I indeed wrote verse when I was young? Why not? I even won a prize for singing! As to my verses, I find them charming, and in view of this example, Jean can't even compete with me. Take that, old man.'

He is referring to Charlot's own adolescent versifying.

Everyone in the family adored Louis. Charlot signed a letter to Louis from Mexico: "Te abraza [*sic*] con mucho cariño, tu nietecito... Muchos besos" 'I embrace you with much tenderness, your little grandchild... Many kisses.' In the 1950s, Odette would speak to me of him with a tenderness on the verge of tears. Louis combined a great family affection with the occasional gruffness of a strong man. In an undated card, he writes to the schoolboy Jean:

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Mon cher Jean, j'ai reçu de toi une lettre, sans date, (quelle mauvaise habitude), et 5 petites photos. Tu ne m'accuse pas réception (qu'elle mauvaise habitude) de ma lettre renfermant des timbres, de sorte que je ne sais pas si tu l'as recue.

Je pense te voir vendredi.

En attendant, je t'embrasse

Ton bon papa

'My dear Jean, I have received your letter, undated (what a bad habit), and five little photos. You don't acknowledge receipt of my letter (what a bad habit) enclosing stamps, so I don't know whether you've received it.

I think I'll see you Friday.

In the meantime, I embrace you.

Your grampa'

After Odette's death, Charlot wrote her daughter Arlette:

La seule chose que j'aurais aimé est un livre de croquis de la main de mon grand père sur des sujets du Mexique. J'aimais le feuilleter quand j'étais petit. J'en avais parlé à Odette mais elle ne savait plus ce qu'il était devenu. (June 13, 1977)

'The only thing I would have liked is a book of sketches in the hand of my grandfather on Mexican subjects. I liked to leaf through it when I was small. I had spoken to Odette about it, but she no longer knew what had become of it.'

For his part, Louis was touchingly aware of how his impoverished family had cared for him into his long old age:

Qu'on n'accuse personne de ma mort.

Adieu Anita, Odette et Jean

et merci pour tout ce que vous avez fait pour [moi].

Je veux embrasse[r] tout trois de tout mon cœur

Votre père et grand père

L. Goupil

le 14 Juin 1919

'That no one be accused of my death.

Adieu Anita, Odette, and Jean

and thank you for all you have done for me.

I want to embrace all three of you with all my heart.

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Your father and grandfather

L. Goupil

June 14, 1919

Charlot used his grandfather Louis as the subject of two of his major French works in gouache: a head and a pair of hands. Charlot said that those paintings revealed to the viewer the seriousness of his purpose as an artist. They reveal also how intensely Charlot studied his grandfather's physiognomy. This was partly because of the interest in the effects of old age. Even more, Charlot was intrigued by what he felt was the Indian character of his grandfather's face. Charlot spoke of seeing an Aztec portrait of Montezuma in his uncle Eugène's house:

that was as classical in its Aztec beauty as any Greek marble, shall we say, is classical of the Greek body. And that bony head with sparse hair, both mustache and beard, looked very much like my own grandfather; for some reason, the Indian had come out in him in the jaw and around the mouth in those hairs that are so obviously Indian.<sup>41</sup> So I got a little mixed up between Emperor Moctezuma and my grandfather, and I had a great respect for the traditions of my family that mentioned that Indian background, that Indian blood that existed in the family. (Interview September 28, 1970)

Louis had three daughters. The first two married into the Colombier<sup>42</sup> and Palmieri families. The third daughter was Anne or Anita, Charlot's mother (December 1, 1870–January 15, 1929). Odette always spoke of her mother's older siblings as half-sisters, although no information has been found about this earlier marriage.

Anne's mother was Sara Louisa Meléndez (also called Marie Louise Meléndes; died December 1910 in Paris), who was called affectionately Sarita and Louisita in the family. She was from Mexico and spoke Spanish as her mother tongue.<sup>43</sup> Louisa described herself as “juive portugaise,” which the family interpreted as a family of good lineage and of either Portuguese or Spanish descent. Charlot himself always spoke of the Jewish side of the family as being *sephardim*, the Jews of Spain.<sup>44</sup> Besides being intelligent and beautiful, Louisa came from a wealthy family—her two brothers were reportedly highly placed in finance and business in Paris—and she probably brought some money with her into Louis's family. Although she married into a Roman Catholic family and was disowned by her own, Louisa remained intensely proud of her religion and an active practitioner. Odette writes that her “ancêtres depuis toujours avaient été, disait-elle sires et siresses de leur tribu (c'est-à-dire docteurs de la loi)” ‘she said her ancestors had always been lords and ladies of their tribe (that is, doctors of the law).’ Louisa attributed one of her family names, Cohen ‘priest,’ to this religious specialty of the family. Charlot himself followed her in this idea and traced atavistically some of his family's religiosity to their Jewish side.<sup>45</sup> At her death, Louisa asked her husband to return to her brothers the prayer book she had been using, which he did. Charlot's grandmother gave him in fact his first contact with a devout member of another religion. When as a child, he visited his grandparents at their country house and his grandmother put him to bed, he wondered why the prayer she said was different from the one his mother used. He

recalls being impressed by a painting of Moses descending from Sinai with the tablets of the law which he could see from his bed:

I have a great devotion, I would say, for the patriarchs, for example, that are part of my devotion... So there is a certain tie with the Old Testament in me that may very well come from Jewish attitudes of my grandmother, for example, that may be different from what most Christians or Catholics have. In our summer country house, for example, when we went every summer—I was very small at the time, maybe five, six years old—I had my, a little bed made up at the foot of the bed of my grandfather and grandmother, and there was a very large religious picture at the head of the bed and that was a picture of Moses with the Tables of the Law. Of course at the time, I didn't make any distinction among things, but obviously my grandfather, who didn't believe in anything very much, had let my grandmother put there her own brand of religious image. But just sleeping at the foot of that big picture of Moses certainly gave me some impressive respect for the Old Testament. (Interview October 10, 1970)

He told me that he had been rather frightened by the painting, and it gave him the idea that other people could be as serious about their religion as Catholics were about Christianity. Charlot's Old Testament subjects tend to be fearsome—the Fall, the Flood, the Sacrifice of Isaac—and he used them to articulate his tragic feelings about life, especially World War I. He appreciated the strong Old Testament strain in William Blake. When as a child I was puzzled by *The Tiger*—"Tiger, tiger, burning bright..."—which my father had recommended to me, he explained: "What kind of a God is it who makes both the tiger and the lamb?" When I asked him once how he was able to be so open to other religions, he answered that he "had no choice. That was what was around" in the family (Interview December 6, 1978). Charlot also assumed his grandmother's strong pride in his Jewish background. His Hawai'i friend, the prominent Jewish lawyer Russell Cades, told me that Charlot always talked to him about his Jewish ancestors and was very proud of them (personal communication, July 30, 1996).<sup>46</sup> Charlot was also devoted to the "holy pagans" of the Bible, like Melchisedek.

Marriage to a Jew was unusual for a French bourgeois family, but very characteristic of Louis, who "was a man with extremely free-thinker ideas. He was a Freemason among other things."<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless Catholicism was the religion practiced in the family. The free-thinking Odette would give a Catholic burial to Louis and have her daughter Arlette baptized, with Jean as godfather. When Louis planned to bury his wife in the family tomb, one of his relatives had a priest perform a ceremony to prepare it for the interment of a non-Catholic. Louis was furious. Odette said repeatedly that her family's Jewish descent was not generally known in the broader family, for whom it would have made a real difference in relations. But how secret it could have been with an active religious person like Louisa is unclear. In any case, the Jewish connection of their daughter Anne became the family secret that balanced the illegitimacy of Henri. The union of Louis and Louisa was very happy, and she was admired and loved. The religious differences were solved with respect and humor. When Charlot was six years

old, Louisa, who would lapse into Spanish, once exclaimed “Jesús, José, Maria!” She and her daughter Anne laughed together, and Louisa said, “One lives in the country and language where one is.”

Charlot was strongly aware of anti-Semitism. Anita Brenner recorded that Sylvanus “Morley also piqued Jean as often as he could by talking slightingly of Jews” (Glusker 2010: 457; July 9, 1927). Artists like Orozco and Dr. Atl could express anti-Semitic views, as seen in Volume 2. Charlot discussed with his daughter Ann the possibility that her being part Jewish could create difficulties for marriage. He told me he had worried about my putting on my wall at boarding school a negative image of a Jew by Toulouse-Lautrec, but ended by deciding I was intelligent enough not to be influenced by it. Having grown up in multi-ethnic places, both Ann and I were only puzzled by such remarks. At the same boarding school, I had to ask my fellow students what this word *kike* meant that they used so often.

The members of the French colony in Mexico married often among themselves, and the Goupils had numerous connections. The closest Mexican relatives were the Labadie family—probably through Louisa and the Labadies’ Jewish connection, Doly Levy (Teodoro Labadie calls Louis his *tío* ‘uncle’).<sup>48</sup> The Mexican branch of the Labadie family was founded by Teodoro Labadie (January 31, 1803–November 23 1864), who was sent by his father to Mexico City in 1829 to found the Banco T. Labadie y Cía.<sup>49</sup> Teodoro was very active in the building of railroads, but was ruined by a business reversal from the shock of which he died. The leadership of the family was then assumed by his son Julio (or Jules; April 12, 1839–February 20, 1888), who founded the hardware store, the Tlapalería de la Palma in 1865. The pharmaceutical section prospered to the point that Julio founded the Droguería de la Palma in 1868 (some say 1867) and then in 1869 moved to a better location, No. 5 de la Calle de La Profesa; today Avenida Madero 43. The new establishment was named the Droguería de la Profesa, J. Labadie Sucs. Y Cía, and was considered the best in Mexico.<sup>50</sup> Julio was very active in the French colony and became the first treasurer of the French Chamber of Commerce.<sup>51</sup> In 1867, Julio married Doly Levy (May 5, 1840–August 3, 1892), the daughter of French Jewish residents of Mexico.<sup>52</sup> Teodoro Labadie writes:

Julio Labadie era protestante, Doly Levy era israelita, convinieron en no hablar nunca de religión y en educar a sus hijos en la religión Católica que era la que predominaba en México. De éste modo los Labadie volvieron a la religión de sus mayores. (1958: 141 f.)

‘Julio Labadie was Protestant, Doly Levy was Jewish. They agreed never to discuss religion and to educate their children in the Catholic religion which was the predominant one in Mexico. In this way, the Labadies returned to the religion of their ancestors.’

Doly was a widow, and her son by her first marriage, Aristid (or Aristide) Martel, was one of the Mexican uncles Charlot knew best.<sup>53</sup>

The Mexican uncle who was most important for Charlot was the second son of Julio and Doly: Luis Enrique Labadie (also Louis; January 29, 1871–March 21, 1923). Luis became sole owner of the Droguería de la Profesa in 1912 and like his father was active in the affairs of the French colony, for

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instance, as president of the *Círculo Francés*; he was decorated by the French government for his contributions. Because of problems during the Mexican Revolution, Luis sold the *Droguería* and began a successful second career as a representative of French and United States businesses. Luis married three times. His second wife, Raquel Suárez (March 28, 1877–March 1911), was the mother of the Mexican cousins to whom Charlot was closest throughout his life: Raquel (born 1900)<sup>54</sup> and Doly (1904– 19??). Luis and his children visited the Charlots in France before World War I, and all the cousins remembered the good times they had together. Charlot drew in his sketchbook a “model for child drawing” for his younger cousin Jules. On April 10, 1913, Luis married his third wife, Luz Priani, whose five children were born too late to be playmates. Doly, a truly remarkable woman, married Antonio Martínez del Campo; the two were close to Jean and Zohmah Charlot during their 1945–1947 stay in Mexico and saw them on the occasion of Jean’s Mexico City retrospective in 1968.<sup>55</sup> Their branch of the family is the one with which Charlot’s own descendants remain in contact today. It was the close relation to Luis Labadie and his family that apparently gave Charlot and his mother the idea of moving to Mexico in 1921. They stayed at the home of Luis on their first, exploratory trip to Mexico, decided that the prospects were good, and returned to France to arrange their affairs. On their immigration, Luis’ third wife was uncomfortable with the idea of the Charlots’ staying in their home again, and they found other quarters (Doly Labadie to John Charlot, December 6, 1980). Charlot stayed with his uncle Aristide Martel and enjoyed the opportunity to study his great collection of Precolumbian art, part of which was later donated to the archeological museum of Mexico.<sup>56</sup>

Charlot quickly entered a circle of leftist, even revolutionary, artists, but continued to see his Mexican family, who were on the opposite end of the political spectrum. It was characteristic of Charlot to like and appreciate people of opposing views. Indeed, Charlot’s Mexican relatives were important for his understanding of Mexico: they gave him a sense of the period of Mexican history before the Revolution. Speaking of staying with members of his family on his first trip to Mexico, Charlot said that he lived:

with a conservative family, and what I had, which was of great import for me to understand Mexico, was really a hangover of pre-Revolution days among people who had been protected economically...in the days when the government was a conservative capitalistic government...And so it helped me a lot. It was sort of a trampoline later on, when I was thrown into the post-Revolution world, by which I could compare the two worlds. I would not have had the same clarity of mind, I would say, if I had not first experienced what we could call pre-Revolution life among what we could call the good families of Mexico or conservative families of Mexico—and later on, of course, in the post-Revolution, the rather mixed up Revolutionary people who were my colleagues. (Interview May 14, 1971)

When I asked whether he had brought together his Mexican family with the artists, he could remember only a later occasion:

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Later on, I mean even in my last trip to Mexico when we lived with Doly and we received some people who certainly were less conservative than they were—Pablo O’Higgins came, and other people—they were always extremely nice to them. And they were—they are—terribly well-bred people, and they can take in what we would call “situations” with a wonderful sense of etiquette. (Interview May 14, 1971)

In fact, Antonio Martínez del Campo, Doly Labadie’s husband, remembered several of the artists with admiration. Moreover, the Mexican family never reacted negatively to Charlot’s own activities:

And when I came on my second trip and found myself in the middle of that circle of, well, shall we say, post-Revolutionary people or people who had taken part actually in the Revolution, and there was the group of artists, my family wasn’t too surprised. I would say I wasn’t even a black sheep. I was just a young man who was doing things that were to pertain to what they would call my salad days. There was a very nice attitude towards me, and they certainly never reproached me about anything that would look like being pro-Revolution. It was taken for granted that as a young man and an artist, especially, I had a certain amount of freedom. I don’t think they were terribly interested in the things I was doing as art. (Interview May 14, 1971)

Charlot’s family was certainly interested in him primarily as a person, but at least by the time I knew them, they were very appreciative of Charlot as an artist.

The French colony of Mexico thus forms an important part of Charlot’s cultural background.<sup>57</sup> Its population in 1849 is estimated at four to six thousand: 42 percent craftsmen, 40 percent merchants, 9 percent members of professions (doctors, teachers, pharmacists, and dentists), and a few unskilled workers (Barker 1979: 124–131). The French were concentrated in the urban areas and divided generally between rich people—wholesalers and bankers—and small retailers and craftsmen. These divisions were overcome by the intense patriotism and clannishness of the colony, which maintained its own national guard, jail, schools, newspapers, banks, churches, and social services. Their pride in their French culture was intense: French customs and holidays were carefully maintained, and children were sent when possible to France for their education. This pride was supported by the prestige that French culture was accorded generally in Mexico, at the time one of the most Francophile nations in the world. French luxury goods were a lucrative commodity for the colony’s businessmen. Luis Labadie himself started a perfume factory towards the end of his life.

Members of the French colony remained politically attached to France as well as emotionally. Louis, for instance, was registered at the French legation (document in the JCC). The Labadies fought for France in the war of 1870, Julio traveling from Mexico to join. Eugène Goupil, in France from at least 1867 to establish his factory (Cohen 1998: 32, note 1), enlisted and was photographed in his uniform. Génin states that the French colony in Mexico was depleted when many left for France to help in World War I; indeed half of the French colony’s working males are estimated to have been lost.<sup>58</sup> Holding a French passport could provide vital protection during the troubles in Mexico. In 1914, for no known reason, Luis Labadie was arrested and threatened with a firing squad (Labadie 1958: 137 f.). The French

ambassador intervened with verifications of his French citizenship. Luis was then deported with others to Havana on a French ship.

The great crisis for the French colony was the French Intervention and Napoleon III's establishment of Maximilian's government in Mexico (1862–1867), which the great majority of the French community welcomed and supported. Members of the community worked for the government and married the occupying French officials; for instance, Julio's sister Amelia married a French officer. When Maximilian's government fell, many French people and Mexican sympathizers retreated to France out of loyalty or fear of reprisals. To their credit, the Mexicans showed no resentment towards the French residents either during or after the Intervention<sup>59</sup> The French Intervention became however the stuff of family stories. Teodoro Labadie (1962: 14) depicts his father telling a guard at a French military museum:

Aunque ahora estoy radicado en París, crecí y viví mucho tiempo en México. La Intervención Francesa, buena o mala, siempre me fascinó y con atención escuchaba los relatos que de ella me contaron mis padres.

'Even though I am now established in Paris, I grew up and lived a long time in Mexico. The French Intervention, for good or bad, always fascinated me and I listened with attention to the stories that the older members of my family told me about it.'

Teodoro himself heard stories of the Intervention and his heroic relatives on both sides. In the same way, his own children were being brought up on stories of the Revolution.

The attachment to Maximilian's government was part of a larger middle-class tendency in the French colony to be "respectueux du gouvernement établi" 'respectful of the established government' (Génin 1933: IX). Charlot's Mexican family and its circle were typical supporters of the government of Porfirio Díaz, who was to be overthrown by the Revolution. To his supporters, Díaz was not the rightist despot depicted in post-Revolution histories, but a successful progressive conservative, all the more attractive for depending on French ideas and personnel, notably the *Científicos*, administrators who brought logical planning to government. Charlot remembered exiled Mexican *Científicos* with their large mutton-chop whiskers holding forth at his parents' dinner table in Paris (Tabletalk December 9, 1970). French thinkers had been influential in the struggle for independence from Spain and then in the plans for the development of the nation. Génin states that Mexicans think of France as their intellectual mother (1908–1910: 12). In his poem *France-Mexique* (1910), read at a banquet of the Cercle Français in the year the Revolution broke out, Génin alludes to the "fratricide" heroism of the battles of the French Intervention: Frenchmen and Mexicans were buried in the same tomb. Now relations are more fortunate. Génin praises Díaz and the members of his administration, like the secretary of education, [Justo] Sierra—*prince au Parnasse* 'Sierra—prince on Parnassus.' He compares Mexican intellectuals with French: *Sierra c'est un Duruy dont l'Art est l'Évangile* 'Sierra, he's a Duruy whose art is the Gospel.' A similar comparison of historical figures produces the unique line: *De Vercingétorix, Cuatemoctzin est frère* 'Cuatemoctzin is the brother of Vercengetorix.' France is influential on political thought to the point that

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people call Mexico *la France d'Amérique* 'the France of America.' Both countries, now free, move towards a glorious future. On a more social level, the wife of Díaz and other elegant Mexicans regularly fulfilled their Sunday obligation at the French chapel of Notre Dame de Lourdes (Génin 1908-1910: 6). This admiration of France was shared even by rebels, such as Valentín Gómez Fariás, who proclaimed on July 17, 1840: "Glory in yourselves, Mexicans! The most polished nation of the earth, illustrious France, has not presented a similar fact" (Calderón de la Barca 1966: 299).

The situation of the French was, therefore, comfortable because they enjoyed all the rights of Mexican citizens (Génin 1908–1910: 12) along with the prestige of French culture and the protection of a French passport. Many Frenchmen saw Mexico as a land to be exploited in order to return to France and had a racist "disdain for the Mexican people and culture" (Barker 1979: 131). Others, like the Goupils and the Labadies, married into Mexican families and felt attached to the land in which many of them were born. Teodoro Labadie writes:

De éste modo nació la rama Labadie de México de quien descendemos llevando un gran amor a Francia, patria de nuestros antepasados y a México nuestra propia patria. (1958: 134)

'In this way was born the Labadie branch of Mexico from which we descend, carrying a great love for France, the fatherland of our ancestors, and for Mexico, our own fatherland.

llevo en mis venas dos sangres nobles: la mexicana y la francesa, amén de que nací en la ciudad de México. Ninguna de las dos nacionalidades pesa más en mi conciencia. Amo entrañablemente [*sic*] por igual a México y a Francia, a las que considero las mejores naciones del mundo y a las que rindo pleitesía y todo mi cariño respetuoso. Al dar más preferencia a uno de estos dos países, lo consideraría como traición a mis propios [*sic*] padres, mi padre francés y mi madre mexicana. (1962: 17)

I carry in my veins two noble bloods—Mexican and French—by grace of having been born in Mexico City. Neither of the two nationalities has greater weight in my consciousness. I love most dearly and equally Mexico and France, which I consider the greatest nations of the world, to which I render homage and all my respectful affection. To prefer one of these two countries above the other, I would consider treason against my own parents, my French father and my Mexican mother.'

Private communications were equally emotional. On April 6, 1925, Louis Goupil wrote from France to his grandson Jean in Mexico:

Con mucho gusto recibí tu carta que me da muy buenas noticias tuyas y de tu mamá. Comprendo muy bien que te gusta mucho este mi país a donde nací. Que clima que sol, y la vida de aquí no es a comparar a la de México, que sol, que lunas tan claras!... Naturalmente ha de haber cambiado el aspecto de la ciudad con tantas automóviles que no existían de mi tiempo.

‘With much pleasure I received your letter, which gives me such good news about yourself and your mother. I understand very well that you like very much this, my country where I was born. What a climate, what sun, and life here cannot be compared to that in Mexico, what sun, what moons so clear!...Naturally the appearance of the city must have changed with so many automobiles, which did not exist in my time.’

Modern Mexico was a latin and Catholic country like France,<sup>60</sup> which was the basis of much of the sympathy felt by French people. But Mexico had in addition its impressive Indian heritage. For the French Americanists, the most interesting Mexican subject was Indian history and culture; and for the Goupils at least, their closest family connection to Mexico was through their Aztec blood. This is made explicit in Eugène Goupil’s important “Introduction” to the first volume of Boban’s catalog of his collection:

Né au Mexique, de père français et de mère mexicaine—descendante des Aztèques, en ligne directe, du côté maternel,—j’aime tendrement mon pays natal. Mon attachement pour la terre où s’est écoulée la première partie de ma vie me pousse à voir avec curiosité tout ce qui intéresse de près ou de loin son passé, ses mœurs, son histoire.<sup>61</sup>

‘Born in Mexico of a French father and a Mexican mother—a descendant of the Aztecs in direct line on her mother’s side—I love tenderly my native land.

‘My attachment to the land in which the first part of my life was passed prompts me to look with interest on everything the touches from near or far its past, its customs, and its history.’

The collection was obtained as “un pieux hommage à la mémoire de ma mère” ‘a pious homage to the memory of my mother.’ The Americanist and family friend Auguste Génin (June 18, 1862–December 3, 1931)<sup>62</sup> underlined the point in his “Lettre-Préface” to the same volume:

Né au Mexique, descendant des Aztèques par sa mère, M. E. Eugène Goupil s’intéresse depuis longtemps à tout ce qui touche l’histoire de ce pays. (XIII)

‘Born in Mexico, descendant of Aztecs through his mother, Mr. E. Eugène Goupil has been interested for a long time in everything connected to the history of that country.’

He also mentions the motive of filial piety: Goupil made his archeological “Avec un soin pieux” ‘with pious care.’

Goupil has obtained the collection so that scholars will be able to present a more accurate picture of Mexico and especially its Indian peoples:

puissent ma bonne volonté et mes efforts amener à faire mieux connaître ma terre natale, la splendide contrée où dort le peuple aztèque mort glorieusement pour la Patrie et pour la Liberté ! (VIII)

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‘may my good will and my efforts contribute to a better knowledge of my native land, the splendid country where the Aztec people sleep, having died gloriously for the Fatherland and for Liberty!’

Génin defines himself within the same group of Americanists, who all shared a purpose:

né comme lui [Goupil] au Mexique, j’aime ardemment, comme vous deux [Goupil et Boban], la patrie mexicaine, la sœur aînée des nations latines d’Amérique, le noble pays trop longtemps méconnu. (XII)

‘born like him [Goupil] in Mexico, I love passionately—as do you both [Goupil and Boban]—the Mexican fatherland, the elder sister of the latin nations of America, the noble country known inaccurately for too long.’

The work of the French Americanists is paying “La dette que tous les Français qui sont allés là-bas ont contractée envers le pays qui leur a donné l’hospitalité et souvent la fortune...” ‘The debt that all French people who have gone there have incurred to the country that gave them hospitality and often a fortune...’ (XIII). The emotional attachment to Mexico was expressed in a determined effort to make a contribution to the recognition of that country’s historical and cultural importance.

French scholars had long played a major, often pioneering role in Mexican studies, and their interest was communicated to French writers of literature.<sup>63</sup> (In some areas, the French were in fact ahead of the Mexican scholars [Keen 1971: 321 f.].) The French Americanists living in Mexico were an important part of this movement (Keen 1971: 436–441). Indeed, members of both the Goupil and Labadie families could be described as Americanists. Eugène Goupil began his collection of Mexican Indian antiquities even before he purchased the Aubin collection. Louis Goupil was an archeological consultant. Julio Labadie had been sent to England in 1856 to study anthropology and paleontology, his first loves. Although he was later forced to devote himself to the family business, he remained interested in archeology and science, taking research trips through Mexico and presenting papers to the Sociedad Médica de México y de París. In 1878, he was decorated with the Palmes Académiques/Palmas Académicas by the French government. His son Luis Labadie received the same honor, and Charlot considered Luis and Aristide Martel genuine connoisseurs of Precolumbian art and culture. Charlot stated:

Then, you mustn’t forget that my family, my cousins and so on, conservative as they were, had a sort of a double edge to themselves. That is, Aristide Martel who had been one of the great men about town in the Paris of the 1890s and so on, he was known as the Monsieur aux Camélias as against the *Dame aux Camélias* of Alexandre Dumas, was at the same time a tremendous connoisseur of pre-Hispanic things and a tremendous lover of Indian things. His private collection was supreme. So things are not as simple as all that. (Interview May 14, 1971)

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Aristide Martel, had a magnificent private collection of pre-Hispanic things, and that was something of a tremendous impact on me. At the time the museum proper was not at all what it is now. It was the Museum of Ethnology.

Charlot remembered very well Martel's reaction to his first fresco, *The Massacre in the Templo Mayor*:

I remember taking my uncle Aristide Martel to see my first fresco, the one in the staircase of the Preparatoria, as soon as it was finished. I must say the day we came the house painters were painting the ceiling, and he couldn't see very much because they had put something over the fresco to protect it, but he was very polite and nice about it. He had a little smile, I would say, about my reconstruction of ancient pre-Hispanic costumes and types, because he was one of the men who knew the most about it, and, as I knew anyhow, they were not historically possible. They were just a sort of a fantasy as far as archeology is concerned, but there was a certain pleasure in knowing that the young Jean Charlot was an artist. It was something to be appreciated, somehow, in having an artist in the family. (Interview May 14, 1971)

Charlot's family was therefore an integral part of the important French movement to appreciate Mexican culture.

As such the family was connected by interest and friendship to other Americanists. Charlot was ten years old at most when the great archeologist Désiré Charnay took him to meet Eugène Boban (Tabletalk February 12, 1972). Boban was very old, almost deaf and blind, and working on prehistoric art, surrounded by engraved stones (Jane M. Walsh email June 9, 2017). Charlot listened to the two old scholars talk and found Boban very interesting and very learned.

Auguste Génin (dates unknown), a friend of Boban, a businessman, and a prolific writer on Mexico, was much more of a family friend (Tabletalk February 12, 1972). He had thought of marrying the young Anne Goupil around 1890.<sup>64</sup> When Charlot and his mother moved to Mexico in 1921, Génin was the head of the French Chamber of Commerce, the picture of a fat and bald businessman. The tenderness between him and Anita was just a sweet memory, and they saw little of each other.

Génin's *Poèmes Aztèques* are unimportant as poetry—Charlot found them windy when he read them at eleven or twelve years old—but Génin was well-informed in history and archeology, and they are considered “faithful versified versions of Aztec myths, religious ideas, and history” (Keen 1971: 457 f.). Charlot was much more interested in the pro-Aztec, anti-Conquistador stance of the historical introduction in prose. Génin was a principal exponent in his many writings of that general Americanist position. The Indians “n’*étaient* point des barbares” ‘were not at all barbarians,’ and their cruelty has been exaggerated in order to hide European atrocities (1923: 21 f.; 1908–1910: 134 ff.; 1933: 33); much has been destroyed by the conquerors (1923: 22 f.; 1908–1910: 135). He argues against the European prejudices about Indians in favor of an accurate recognition of the greatness of their achievements; indeed, many of the criticisms made against Indians can be made against Europeans as well (1908–1910: 109 f., 120, 130, 133 f., 136, 138; 1912: 308).

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The most important Americanist that Charlot knew and the one that made the strongest impact on him was the famous Désiré Charnay (1828–October 24, 1915).<sup>65</sup> Charnay's friendship with Louis Goupil seems to date from 1860, when Louis helped him with his digging and photography in Mexico and accompanied him on his ascent of Popocatepetl.<sup>66</sup> Louis's own copy of the portfolio of photographs that he helped produce, *Album fotográfico Mexicano*, was passed down to Charlot. Charnay lived near Louis Goupil and the Charlots in Paris, and they saw each other "nearly every Sunday."

Every weekend we would go and have dinner and a day with my grandfather Goupil, for example, and he is the man who was my closest tie to Mexico. Very often the archeologist Charnay would be there, telling further stories about Mexico. (Interview October 22, 1970)

Charnay established a special relation with Charlot, who was then no more than twelve years old; he told him stories, showed him photographs, and took him to lectures and to visit Boban. Charlot's mother and grandfather also took him to hear Charnay lecture. At Charlot's first communion, Charnay gave him a little whistle that came from the same tomb in which Charnay had found the famous toy of the dog on wheels.<sup>67</sup> Charlot played on the whistle as Charnay described finding the preserved brain of its original owner, the buried child, until Charlot's mother told him to take it out of his mouth. Charlot remembered Charnay as a great storyteller, whose tales were even better than those in his book. One of his great exploits was climbing to the top of Popocatepetl with his pet parrot on his wrist. Turning to go down, he made a false step and rolled all the way to the bottom of the volcano. When he stopped, he found his parrot was still perched on his wrist.<sup>68</sup> Charlot read *Anciennes Ville du Nouveau Monde* all the way through; he loved the frontispiece of Charnay dressed in a loincloth in the jungle and the passage about the tomb in which his whistle had been found (Charnay 1885: 143). While recognizing the incorrectness of some of Charnay's ideas, which had an unfortunate and undue influence on his reputation, Charlot appreciated Charnay's important work in field archeology, which was a major step towards the scientific treatment of the Mexican Indian culture (Tabletalk February 12, 1972). Moreover, Charnay had suffered the lot of the pioneer: he was vilified for being ahead of his time, holding correct positions that were opposed to mainstream views, and died before he was vindicated (Interview September 28, 1970). Charlot concluded: "So that was a lesson, more general, somehow, especially related to Mexico, that it is dangerous to be the first one in finding something new or in doing something new." Besides Charlot's general sympathy for the underdog, he would champion unappreciated artists all his life, such as Marcel-Lenoir in France, Francisco Goitia and Manuel Martínez Pintao in Mexico, and Louis Elsheimius in the United States.

Charlot studied the excellent casts of artworks that Charnay brought back to France as well as the illustrations in Charnay's book. For instance, he remembered the illustration of a *cargador* 'burden bearer' (Charnay 1885: 12) that he could compare with the curios in his parents' collection; the subject later became one of Charlot's most important themes. Charnay not only taught Charlot a good deal about Mexican culture, but inspired him with the subject. Moreover, Charnay demonstrated in his photographs of ruins that archeological records could themselves be works of art; the same combination of scholarship and esthetics would be a characteristic of Charlot's own activity in the field (McVicker 1994). Charnay's work and that of the other Americanists provide a secure baseline for the study of Charlot's own writings

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on Mexican Indian culture. Indeed, Charlot's grandfather Louis saw him following in Charnay's footsteps when he was working as an archeologist with the Carnegie Institution (letter to Charlot): "As-tu trouvé d'autres ruines azteques depuis celles de Désirée Charnais [*sic*]. Si oui fais-les connaître" 'Have you found other Aztec ruins since those of Désirée Charnais. If yes, let me know about them.' In an undated letter perhaps in response, Charlot wrote:

En todas partes hay recuerdos de Charnay y sus libros siguen muy leídos por los archeólogos. Todos me hacen grandes saludos y me apretan la mano con gran emoción cuando saben que yo soy de la familia Goupil y casi me da eso respeto para mí mismo.

'Everywhere people remember Charnay, and his books continue to be much read by archeologists. Everywhere people salute me highly and give me their hand with great emotion when they know I belong to the Goupil family, and they almost give me that respect simply because of who I am.'

Charlot himself recorded his memories of Charnay and stated succinctly his influence in a letter to Keith Davis of October 20, 1977:

Désiré Charnay was a close friend of my maternal grandfather, Louis Goupil...The friendship between Louis and Désiré Charnay must date from Mexico in the 1850's and 60's.

My memories of Charnay date of my youth before the first World War. In Paris he was a neighbor of Louis who lived Rue des Marais. Charnay visited often, at times came to our family dinners. He was a great talker. On the slopes of Popocatepetl he had found this child's tomb and explained that the quality of the earth was such that it had dissolved the bones but that the brain was left intact.

When Porfirio Diaz planned the Centennial Festivities of 1910, Charnay fully expected to be the one chosen to represent the pioneers of Mexican archeology, but Diaz invited instead Maudslay, an Englishman. This hurt Charnay deeply. He also knew how he had 'lost face' with contemporary colleagues by sticking to his story that he had dug out children's toys on wheels. Only after his death did further discoveries prove him right.

He also assigned a relatively modern date to the Mayan ruins while the trend of his day assigned them to pre-history (see Le Plongeon and the continent of Mu).

Charnay took me—I must have been twelve years old—to a scientific lecture, and he would stand up and contradict the lecturer fearlessly. My mother took me to one of *his* lectures at the Trocadero. I remember a group of Japanese archeologists eager to take notes, who desisted when, leaving more meaty matters aside, Charnay digressed in a detailed story about the Chinese cook he hired to go on a jungle expedition and

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whose queue trailed in the stews and how, disregarding his loud Chinese objections, Charnay had the cook's head shaved.

Tree rings was another of his pet subjects. To learn the age of tropical ruins from tree rings was a fallacy as the trees grow more than one ring a year. Charnay was first in having made casts from wet newspapers instead of heavier materials (Palenque, Sacrifice of the Tongue). He spoke of his photography and how he used wet plates and how, in spite of a makeshift tent, many plates were wrecked by mosquitoes drowning in the sticky substance. I still have from my grandfather some of Charnay's old sepia proof, mostly from Mitla.

My mother and I went to dinner at his apartment. His wife looked to me equally old, and there was a strong feeling that they had no children, though of course these would have been grownup and gone away. But no reference to them, no photos, etc. It was a smallish conventional city apartment. Only the salt cellar set on the table was an archeological tripod with rattling spheres for feet. My mother felt a little queazy about it as she had about the whistle.

On a visit to the Trocadero, Charnay pointed to objects he had given the Museum and told us that when he died they had promised that there would be a bust of him set in that same room. He seemed very pleased at the idea.

While researching in the Archives of the Academy of San Carlos in Mexico City in the 1940's, I came upon original documents concerning Charnay, asking permission for an expedition...

I myself have followed the call, part family tradition, and part, so I would like to think, due to the dynamic example of Charnay.

Charnay exemplifies the wonderful energy of the nineteenth-century explorers; Charlot remembered him as very old but "very lively, very healthy" (Interview September 28, 1970). The same energy can be felt in the lives of Charlot's principal forebears and was communicated to his own generation. I remember my Aunt Odette, who vibrated with energy into her old age, telling me that she and her contemporaries found people my age "so tired." Much of the family energy in Mexico was used for cultural projects. Besides studying Indian cultures and collecting artworks, members of the family were early practitioners of photography: Louis Goupil, Felipe Labadie, and Aristide Martel.<sup>69</sup> Felipe was in fact in charge of the photography department of the Droguería de la Profesa. Charlot reported that "Labadie had a corner of the Droguería de la Profesa done as a sort of Turkish Ottoman harem. When he died, it was turned into a folk-art corner" (Tabletalk December 6, 1978). In these artistic interests, the Labadies were exceptional in the French community, which was devoted mostly to business (Génin 1908–1910: 2).

As stated earlier, the family was very united despite its extension. Besides much visiting among the members, there was also considerable overlap in the generations, which supported family solidarity

and a sense of history. Charlot's grandfather, Louis Goupil, was regularly taken to the Place des Vosges in Paris by his grandmother Marie Adelaïde Goupil. He was timid and would hide himself in her crinolines. Louis's wife, Charlot's grandmother, would describe to the young Jean the life of upper-class Mexicans as she had known it in her youth:

grandmother would tell me, for example, that a lady—that corresponded, I would say, to a woman of virtue—I suppose virtue would have been considered something of the better classes—it was impossible for her to make a single step in the street. Of course, she explained it very practically: that the streets were either unpaved and absolutely impossible with water and dust and what-not, or else they were paved with round stones and with the very small shoes and high heels that the women had at the time, they would have fallen down. So that you took a carriage even to go from one block to another. It was the only thing to do.<sup>70</sup>

Of course, other family members and visitors from Mexico would bring information and stories:

a grandfather of mine married in Mexico in mid-nineteenth-century. The family story has it that his wife was of the ripe age of thirteen. The first evening, she insisted on bringing her many little dolls into the conjugal bed, and poor grandfather was furious. (Charlot *Mary and Art* 1958 lecture 2)

Charlot parodied the bridegroom searching for her among the items of her collection. Charlot recalled that at a big family dinner of some twenty people, his uncle wanted to show them how Mexicans ate, so he brought one avocado to the table; it cost five francs in France. The avocado was carefully diced, shared, and pronounced good (Tabletalk April 23, 1971). Mistakes about Mexico could cause amusement; Charlot laughed about Apollinaire's mention of Mexican pineapple trees.<sup>71</sup> Family photo albums also provided views of Mexico; eight sheets of such albums have survived with views of Mexico City and surroundings and of Mexican Indians in native costumes. Subjects include several that Charlot will later use in his own art: *cargadores* 'burden bearers,' women grinding corn for tortillas (called *molenderas* on the sheets), men drawing sap from maguey plants, vendors in canoes, and armed men on horseback or on foot. The family owned more formal collections of photographs; besides those by Charnay, sixteen or nineteen matted cityscapes by Julio Michaud have survived, as well as his photograph of the famous, aztec monumental stone calendar.<sup>72</sup>

Located both in Mexico and in France, the family was bilingual, and both the French and the Spanish forms of names were used. Charlot's grandfather Louis used either Spanish or French in his family letters, but he and his wife both lapsed into Spanish when their emotions required it. Spanish-language books were available to the children; Charlot illustrated a cover for a book of extracts from *Don Quijote de la Mancha*. In his letter of June 4, 1925, to his grandson, Louis writes:

Cuanto a Odette esta en buena salud y lo que me estraná en ella es que sepa el español como lo sabe pues puede uno tener una conversacion con ella muy bien, con algunas irregularidades naturalmente.

‘As to Odette, she is in good health. What amazes me in her is that she knows Spanish as well as you do, so one can have a good conversation with her, with some irregularities naturally.’

Charlot’s own Spanish, when he went to Mexico, was fluent, but accented and “with some irregularities”; Carlos Mérida stated that Charlot learned the language very quickly (Interview January 28, 1971). An effort was made to pass the language on to the next generation. Odette writes to her mother on March 25, 1926: “Bon Papa va très bien, Arlette aussi. Tous les matins ils parlent espagnol, c’est superbe” ‘Grampa is very well, Arlette also. Every morning they speak Spanish, it’s superb.’ Similarly, after our 1945–1947 stay in Mexico, my father tried to speak Spanish with his children, but when we resisted, he characteristically did not insist. I will discuss Charlot’s childhood and adolescent study of Náhuatl in the next chapter.

The vivid personalities, intense energy, rich background, and varied interests of the family members made for a strong family atmosphere. I remember feeling this when I visited our closest Labadie relatives in 1992, the family of Antonio Martínez del Campo: the language was Spanish, but the quickness and lightness of the repartee seemed French.<sup>73</sup> Charlot seems to have seen the family history repeating itself on the birth of his first grandchild Malia to his daughter Ann and her Canadian-Venezuelan husband:

*Cette petite aura des antécédents très mélangés ! Mais je suis content qu’elle grandisse dans un pays de langue espagnole et connaisse des coutumes différentes.*  
(letter to Odette, December 16, 1962)

‘This little girl will have very mixed forebears! But I’m happy that she’ll grow up in a Spanish-speaking country and know different customs.’

*La chiquilla va a crecer en un país de idioma española y aprenderá el Español lo mismo que el inglés, lo cual me da gusto.*

‘The little girl is going to grow up in a Spanish-speaking land and will learn Spanish the same as English, which pleases me.’ (Charlot to Luz Jiménez, December 18, 1963)

The Goupils are a prime example of an unstudied aspect of culture contact and diffusion: families that moved and settled across borders, appreciating, supporting, and publicizing their host cultures through such activities as collecting and publishing. Charlot can be viewed as the cultural tip of this phenomenon, using his family’s collective experience as a springboard for creativity.

#### **4. THE IMMEDIATE FAMILY**

The marriage of Anne and Henri was unconventional because of their backgrounds. Charlot stated:

both were French and both had flaws in their pedigree as French people. Sometimes French people are very uppity about being French, and father was part Russian,

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mother was part Mexican, so that I can see very well how both of them got together...

(Interview November 18, 1970)

Charlot also mentioned Anne's Jewish blood as a bourgeois problem.<sup>74</sup> No obstacles whatsoever were raised by the immediate family. Anne's father had married a Jewess, and Charlot felt his grandfather "was probably delighted to have somebody in the family who had been breaking, without wanting to, but breaking the rules of perfect bourgeois behavior. He was that type of a man, who would rather like it very much" (Interview November 18, 1970). Both Louis and Henri were Freemasons, and Henri clearly did not share the intense Russian anti-Semitism of his time.

Every indication is that the marriage of Henri and Anita was a union of love. The family has preserved his letter to Anita, full of romance and humor, in his wonderfully expansive handwriting, apparently written on her accepting his offer of marriage:

June 28, 1894

Réponse

Mon être est comme le château abandonné qu'un beau matin une jeune châtelaine vient ouvrir.—

Dans la pièce sombre le rayon de soleil vient de pénétrer et la poussière se trouve en pluie d'or transformée.

Abeilles, moucheron & papillons entrent par la fenêtre entrouverte, l'air rompt les toiles d'araignées, et fuyant devant l'invasion de la clarté, se sauvent les cloportes. Rien n'est neuf dans la nature,—mais oh combien semble plus doux le gazouillement des oiseaux,—combien le vert est plus frais et engage à l'espérance,—combien la voix de la jeunesse promet encore de l'avenir,—et ce monde quoique même, semble tout nouveau.

On est joyeux, on a envie de rire, et cependant les larmes emplissent les yeux.—On est fort, et cependant, comme le lierre, on cherche un appui.—

On est heureux et cependant—on mendie une consolation.—

On est bien le même, comme aux autres jours.—mais on a pour compagne l'amour.

H Charlot

'Response:

My being is like an abandoned castle that a young lady has just opened on a beautiful morning.—

In the dark room, the sun ray has just penetrated, and the dust is suddenly transformed into a golden rain.

Bees, gnats, and butterflies enter through the half-opened window. The breeze breaks the spiderwebs, and fleeing the invasion of light, the woodlice save themselves.

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Nothing is new in nature,—but O! how much sweeter seems the warbling of the birds,  
—how much fresher and more hopeful the greenery is,—how much the voice of  
youth promises a long future,—and this world, although the same, seems all new.

One is joyous, one wants to laugh, and yet tears fill the eyes.—One is strong, and yet,  
like ivy, one looks for a support.—

One is happy and yet—one begs for consolation.—

One is really the same, as in other days.—but one has love for a companion.’

The marriage contract was signed shortly thereafter on August 31, 1894.

The love expressed in Henri’s letter was the dominant emotion in the family. The first,  
childhood prose work by Charlot is on this theme:

Le petit garçon studieux

Un papa et une maman regardaient un petit garçon qui travaillait avec ardeur à faire  
une Analyse et du verbe, ils n’avaient pas de taches et le cahier était bien propre Aussi  
le papa et la maman aimaient le petit garçon de tout leurs cœurs

‘The studious little boy

A papa and a mama watched the little boy who worked ardently at his parsing and  
conjugations. They had no ink spots, and the workbook was very clean. So the papa  
and the mama loved the little boy with all their hearts.’

One of Jean’s earliest poems speaks of his love for his father:

Papa prend son  
Inhalation  
Dont la fumée  
Vit parfumée  
D’une senteur  
De rose en fleur.

Si la vapeur  
a cette odeur  
C’est qu’elle touche  
Un peu la bouche  
Du cher papa  
Tra la la la.

‘Papa takes his  
Inhalation  
Whose steam  
Lives perfumed

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With a scent  
Of flowering rose.

If the vapor  
has this odor  
It's because it touches  
A little the mouth  
Of dear papa  
Tra la la la.'

Both Odette and Jean were close to their father, who spent time with them, fascinated them, and entered into their amusements. Henri's love of clowning is displayed in photographs and movies, and Jean followed his example in movies of him as a child. Henri drew with Jean in his ledger and exchanged rebus letters with him, and the son writes to him in a very familiar tone. Charlot kept five of his father's flower drawings in colored pencil. In a very early childhood drawing, Charlot depicted his family as snails; Henri is the biggest (*Juvenilia 1904 17,475b recto-c recto*). I believe Henri was a role model in parenting for Charlot. He once told me—as a horrible example—an anti-Semitic joke of his youth: a father urges his son to jump into his arms and then whisks them away to teach him that he should trust no one.

The mother was particularly important in French families of the time—the world of Proust—and Jean developed a close relationship with Anita, living with her alone as an adult from the time they moved to Mexico in 1921 to her death in New York City in 1928. Jean was very much his mother's favorite and the star of the family, loved and admired by all. Odette developed certain problems that will be discussed below.

This affectionate unity did not obscure the great differences in personality and opinions of the parents. Charlot was well aware of these differences but always felt that they were an advantage:

Mother's piety was always alive. As the world she had known and its pomps gradually left her, this piety deepened to a hue of valid mysticism, but that phase came later on, towards the end. Father was a freethinker and, when not busy at his office, dreamed of a global anarchy to come that would prove a freethinker's heaven on earth, *le Grand soir*. Mother's sweet proddings churchwise and father's caustic, amused disapproval proved an unmatched combination for devotion. I could thus simultaneously obey and rebel, be docile and choose a path of my own. (*Born Catholics 1954: 99*)

Henri was a mason and a freethinker, a most unusual person in such a Catholic bourgeois milieu. He was also involved in anarchism and Russian revolutionary movements:

he had been involved with a lot of the heroic times of the working movement. Of course, he wasn't a worker himself, but he would side with what were the underdogs, and being a Russian, he would of course feel very interested in the struggle that was

subterranean at the time that went on in Russia. And he had direct contact with the people that later on became the leaders of the Communist Party. In fact, he got in touch with the people, and, for example, when some of the high dignitaries of the Tsar were being bombed and sometimes, of course, assassinated, he pretty much knew what was going on and from time to time would bring to our bourgeois Parisian house some people who were pretty much disreputable, I remember, by bourgeois standards, of course. I remember him telling to my mother to be very nice to the fellow he was going to bring to dinner because one of the ministers of the Tsar's cabinet had just been blown up and the man was somewhat nervous. Well, that's about all we knew about it, but we were nice to the man, of course, who was somewhat nervous. And he was, he knew personally quite a number of them, and Kalinin, for example, who, I think, was the first president of the Soviet Republic—not Lenin, Kalinin—was a friend of his. So we did have through him a sort of insight into the world as is, especially that world that exploded into the great Russian Revolution.<sup>75</sup>

But in the case of my father, he was a sympathizer, shall we say, with people that may have been perhaps more anarchists. Of course there was at the time no articulate Communist group, and the old Union of the World Workers, I think was the name, was perhaps more anarchical than what we would call now Communist. My father, of course, was one of the people to whom Russians who came to Paris would go to, not only because he spoke Russian, but because he was in sympathy for the people who had to leave the Russia of the Czars and go into exile. At the time, of course, the Left people, the Leftist people, the future Communists, if you want to say that, who left Russia and had to rush to Paris and eke their living there—my father was very good to them. I think he was gooder than we knew, but from time to time, he would tell my mother that he would bring in for dinner somebody, and we vaguely knew the name. A man like Kalinin, for example, who was the first president of the Soviets, was one of those people. And father was always very gentle about telling about those people. He told very little...And of course those people behaved very nicely, and I suppose they were grateful. (Interview, November 18, 1970)

Although a successful businessman, Henri had a strong sense of the instability of the established order. He insisted that Odette learn a manual trade that she could survive by in case of war or revolution, good advice for a generation that would experience two World Wars. Odette chose millinery and passed the same idea on to her daughter. Charlot's mother would work as a dressmaker in Mexico. Jean's own political attitudes were influenced essentially by his father's anarchical championing of the underdog:

he was a strong man as far as what we would call social justice was concerned and went certainly much further than anybody that I can think of in the family in siding with the underdog. And that also of course was for me, was an example and an example that tied up, even though he didn't do it from a religious point of view but a social point of view, with again the Catholic writers that I loved. For example, Léon

Bloy, whose relation to the poor is a very important element in my own religious makeup.<sup>76</sup>

I think there's just two or three things perhaps that impressed me when I was very young. One of them: I was speaking of flags, and father spoke of them as rags, and my mother shut him up very quickly and so on. It was rather a way of speaking that he enjoyed, maybe because it scandalized my mother a little bit, but he would speak of things like *le grand soir*, for example, in which the establishment would disappear and the workers would take over the world. Of course, all those things, as I said, were more anarchical than organized, and I must say that with the coming of the Soviets, when I was in Mexico, we all had that same feeling of something nearly artistic that was going on rather than something that had social realities. And I don't think I am a leftist in any way. The moment that the left becomes organized and becomes bureaucratic, I lose interest in it; that is, when they become the upper dogs, I lose interest in the underdogs. (Interview November 18, 1970)

Charlot himself was viscerally unable to accept as "natural" or "normal" any establishment, whether it be in society, religion, or the world of art; he was never able to adhere to any organization, movement, or vogue, or accept any political nostrum. This critical stance was in all likelihood implanted by his father; it was nourished by Charlot's high Christian ideals, which were unrealizable by any human organization. Like his father and his grandfather Louis, Charlot was, therefore, always a nonconformist, a contrarian, a loner, an outsider. At many points in his life, especially regarding his work, he proved himself stubborn and even ornery. Significantly, his own religiosity and philosophy of art urged him to subordinate his individualism to communal effort, and he in fact longed to do so. The contradiction remained throughout his career.

Charlot always respected the nonreligious character of his father's social positions; he did not try to assimilate them into his own views, which were based on religion. Similarly he did not leap at the chance, as many Catholics would, to think that his father had returned to religion in his final sickness:

He was part of his generation in the sense that he was somewhat cynical about the outer forms of organized religion, and I don't know that he was an atheist. Later on, when he...at the end of his life, he was quite sick and quite, well, physically and mentally ill for a while just before dying, and at the time, very naturally, I would say, his earlier training, which had been religious, came to him, and he wanted to go to church. Of course, he couldn't move, and at the time he was incapacitated. (Interview October 5, 1970)

In fact, one of Henri's earlier poems has survived, and is quoted below, in which he combines something of his social views with religious sentiments. Many years later, Charlot would respect Odette's views, writing to her daughter Arlette on her death:

nous allons prier avec ferveur pour son repos éternel. Certainement Dieu accepte la franchise avec laquelle ma chère sœur fut fidèle à ses opinions. Elle ne fut pas de

ceux dont parle l'Évangile qui disent "Dieu, Dieu, Dieu" mais dont les actions ne correspondent guère à leurs paroles.<sup>77</sup>

'we will pray fervently for her eternal rest. Certainly God accepts the frankness with which my dear sister was faithful to her opinions. She was not one of those whom the Gospel describes as saying "God, God, God" but whose actions hardly correspond to their words.'

Living in a large and diverse family had taught Charlot to respect differences. Even more, his unusual capacity for empathy enabled him to see through the eyes of others. He was thus able to collaborate throughout his life with people who had ideas very different from his own. A number of people found it extraordinary that he, a practicing Catholic, could be so close to the Mexican muralists who were communists. After all, even as late as the aftermath of World War II, the Catholic church condemned Fellini's *Open City* for showing a priest working with communists in the resistance. But Charlot had learned within his immediate family to judge people by their fundamental attitudes rather than by the solutions they proposed. From his experience with his father, he knew he could respect, admire, and love someone with whom he differed. When Tina Modotti's activist lover, Julio Antonio Mella, was murdered, Charlot wrote Anita Brenner ("Todavía no estoy bien"): "Lo de Tina me dio pena. Era amigo mio el comunista este y muy loveable" 'The news of Tina made me sad. He was a friend of mine, this communist, and very lovable.'

Henri was a particularly lovable father. In a number of photographs of him and in the short flip-book film that was made of him, he is clowning uninhibitedly. Although he obviously possessed the dignity of a successful businessman, he could enter into games and the childish imagination. He wrote doggerel and translated Russian folk songs that would have been fascinating to his children:

Il y avait chez nous  
Un énorme loup  
Qui dévorait beaucoup  
Qui dévorait tout

Tuez le loup Tuez le loup  
Et consolez vous

'There was in our country  
An enormous wolf  
That devoured much  
That devoured all

Kill the wolf Kill the wolf  
And console yourself'

Inside the fun was a definite message:

Le loup ne dévore que les méchants  
Il protège les pauvres gens  
‘The wolf only devours bad people  
He protects the poor’

Henri wrote occasional poetry, and in the lines of one can be found thoughts similar to those Jean would include in his own:

Le ciel est bleu sombre  
Les étoiles d’argent  
Moi simple ombre  
Suis à l’opposé du firmament

Que m’importe être rien  
Informe plat insaisissable  
Si je ressens la beauté du bien  
Et que mon espoir soit inlassable

Je bénis Dieu le créateur  
Qui me permet de tout comprendre  
Trouver grand d’aimer à toute heure  
Tout ce qui n’est pas à vendre  
‘The sky is a somber blue  
The stars are silver  
I, simple shadow  
Am at the opposite end from the sky

What does it matter to me that I am nothing  
Without form, flat, ungraspable  
If I still feel the beauty of the good  
and that my hope be untiring

I bless God the Creator  
Who permits me to understand everything  
To find it great to love always  
All that cannot be bought or sold.’

Jean remembered vividly that his father:

would tell me stories from the old Russian folklore and illustrate them. He would illustrate them as he was speaking, and of course, there again, I looked at the *creation*

of art, that is, the *making* of art that went with his words, and I remember some things about a little white horse, and it was in the forest, pine forest, and he would draw a suggestion of the pine forest and then the wooden, really log cabins of the Russians with their typical roof and folk sculptures, and so on. And as he went on, he described and put down the creatures that were part of the tale, so that he had quite some ability in drawing, and when he wasn't busy with chess playing—he was a great chess player—he would from time to time take some object or some flower piece that was around and make a drawing from nature in color with the color pencils which to me was a marvelous thing to see being done. So both my mother and father, by example, I would say, not specially by words, not specially by urging me—I didn't need any urging—are at the base of my career as a painter. (Interview September 15, 1970)

These childhood experiences with his father influenced Charlot's own direction towards storytelling in art, besides introducing him to another nation's folklore and folk art. Charlot continued to read Russian literature, although I do not know which works. When in the early 1950s, the American bishops condemned writers for criticizing the clergy, Charlot objected that there was a long European literary tradition of doing so; he gave the example of the village priest often being a figure of fun in Russian stories. I have, however, detected no specifically Russian cultural influences on Charlot, although he was conscious and proud of his Russian background.

Jean's relationship with his mother was unusually broad and intense. Added to the usual mother-son connection were their religious devotion and their dedication to art. Moreover, because of Henri's death, Jean had to assume the care of his mother, which eventuated in his living with her through most of his twenties. He felt the responsibility acutely and was fiercely protective; he wrote two furious letters to Brenner when he felt she had been disrespectful to his mother.<sup>78</sup> I remember him always speaking of his mother with a great deal of emotion. Much of this came from the great love and the very high regard he had for her. Some of it came from the fact that he felt he had failed to handle adequately his father's affairs and thus provide for his mother; even more important, he felt that he had been responsible for her death. The event as my mother told it to me was that, coming from Mexico and with no idea of New York City winters, he had rented an apartment without heating, and his mother had died of pneumonia. In fact, the apartment did have heating, but the management was failing to fix it. My mother's account undoubtedly reflects my father's blaming of himself. After his mother's death, Charlot suffered a breakdown and had to be cared for by friends for several days (undated letter to Odette, received around March 1, 1929). In 1940, Charlot named his first child and only daughter after his mother, and his first granddaughter received the same name (Charlot to Luz Jiménez, December 18, 1963): "Se llama Ann Malia Ann por el nombre de mi mama y de su mama tambien" 'She is called Ann Malia, Ann for the name of my mother and her mother as well.'

Charlot's feelings for his mother are expressed in his surviving childhood letter quoted above and in the pervasive theme of the suffering of women in the war—mothers, wives, and fiancées—in the characteristically empathetic poems he wrote while he was in service. Those feelings were certainly

influential on his choice of artistic themes in which mothers play a prominent part, such as Pietàs, Mexican kitchens, and mothers and children in their normal interactions.

In the letters Anne Charlot wrote Jean in 1928—while they were separated because of his work at Chich'en Itza—she shows herself a devoted mother. She worries about his health, clothes, and haircut. She sends colors and shoes bought at a sale and is surprised and sorry when they pinch. She reassures him about her health and worries that he is worried; but she is frank in her reports of her medical check-ups: “Épuisement complet. Résultat de toutes les peines et déceptions endurées” ‘Complete exhaustion. Result of all the sufferings and disappointments endured’ (February 15, 1928). She inquires about his work, which always interests her and which she admires; but she worries that he is overworking: “je reçois de tes nouvelles où tu me parles des nouvelles merveilles découvertes et sans doute ce sera plus de travail encore pour toi” ‘I receive your news in which you tell me of new discovered marvels, and undoubtedly that will be still more work for you’ (March 3, 1928); “Je souhaite qu’Earl [Morris] ne découvre plus rien puisque tu parais fatigué de Chichen et que ton ‘projet particulier’ te plaisait mieux” ‘I hope that Earl [Morris] won’t discover anything else, because you seem tired of Chich’en and your “private project” pleased you more’ (Lundi [March 19, 1928]). A mother’s worries are limitless: “Dans toute la république, les volcans bougent. J’espère qu’à Chichen, près de la mer, tu n’as pas de ces distractions volcaniques” ‘In the whole republic, the volcanoes are in movement. I hope that at Chich’en, near the ocean, you won’t have these volcanic distractions’ (March 3, 1928). She is happy when photographs show him looking well:

vous avez un air calme et content qui fait plaisir à voir (February 15, 1928).  
‘you seem calm and content, which pleases me to see’

On m’a renvoyé une lettre de toi avec une bien jolie photo qui m’a fait le plus grand plaisir, car tu as ton bon sourire et ton air malin si habituels. Je vois avec *joie* que tu continues à être assis sur une pierre (malgré la commodité des pliants) et que ton chapeau à bords relevés constitue l’idéal pour ce soleil de feu !!! (March 16, 1928)  
‘Your letter was forwarded to me with a very pretty photo, which gave me the greatest pleasure, because you have your so habitual good smile and clever air. I see with *joy* that you go on sitting on a stone (despite the convenience of folding chairs) and that your hat with raised brims is ideal for this fiery sun!!!’

But worries return: “J’espère que ton livre avance et que tu travailles à l’ombre et pas assis sur une pierre” ‘I hope that your book is progressing and that you are working in the shade and not sitting on a stone’ (April 29, 1928). She expresses eloquently her awareness that he has structured his life not according to his own needs and desires, but in order to help her:

c’est une hymne de reconnaissance envers toi à chaque moment, cher enfant, qui me procure par un si grand sacrifice ce ‘dolce farniente’ qui me redonne la santé physique et morale, si utile pour la nouvelle étape que nous allons entreprendre à N.Y. (Lundi [March 19, 1928])

‘I sing a hymn of gratitude to you at every moment, dear child, who has procured for

me by such a great sacrifice this *dolce farniente* [life of rest and ease] that gives me again physical and emotional health, so useful for the new stage that we are going to undertake in New York.'

He reciprocated with his appreciation of her own efforts, as he wrote to Brenner:

She is 56 and accepted to work hard[,] work to let me free time to paint. I admire that and if there was no other reason, and there are, I would like her as I do. ("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 financial situation was so bad that my mother took a job: teacher. At her age, it takes 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 will be necessary only for a short time.'

In religion, the influence of Anne and others prevailed over that of Jean's father and grandfather. She herself seems to have had the normal Catholic devotionism of her time. She composed or more likely copied some devotional texts in a notebook in Mexico, the language and the thoughts of which have nothing out of the ordinary: "Les belles prières" 'Beautiful Prayers,' "Principales Directions pour les petits enfants" 'Principal Directions for Little Children,' "Dévotion à la Ste Vierge" 'Devotion to the Holy Virgin,' "Dévotion au Sacré Cœur de Jésus" 'Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus,' and so on. Such devotional reading was apparently important for her: "Je trouve que c'est une lecture appropriée à la Semaine Sainte et bonne à méditer" 'I find that it is an appropriate reading during Holy Week and good for meditation' (March 30, 1928). When she thinks of leaving Mexico for New York, "l'idée de pouvoir enfin entendre la messe me ravit profondément" 'the idea of being able at last to attend Mass thrills me profoundly' (March 31 (b), 1928). Mass attendance was then illegal in Mexico.

Jean himself would go through more difficult and original stages in his religious life. For instance, he had much of his father's attitude towards the embodiment of Christianity in the Roman Catholic Church; apart from a brief period in his adolescence, his religion would be less churchy than his mother's. Nonetheless, they shared important sympathies. Anne appreciated the iconoclastic Léon Bloy as much as Jean: "J'ai relu les dernières colonnes de l'église et j'ai ri plus encore qu'à la première lecture; c'est d'un drôle..." 'I reread *The Last Columns of the Church*, and I laughed still more than the first time I read it; it's so funny...' (February 8, 1928). Her devotion had its intellectual side; she fulminates against eclecticism in religion:

C'est si idiot ce ramassis de toutes les religions, toutes les philosophies pour en revenir uniquement... à l'Évangile. Elle me dit très sérieusement 'C'est extraordinaire, tout ce qui est dans la vie impersonnelle je l'ai trouvé mot pour mot

dans l'Évangile.' Je lui réponds: 'Dites [*sic*] le contraire, je vous prie. Tout ce qui est dans l'Évangile a été répété dans la vie impersonnelle !' (April 9, 1928)

'It's so idiotic, this pile-up of all the religions, all the philosophies, to return uniquely...to the Gospel. She told me very seriously, "It's extraordinary, everything that is in the impersonal life I found word-for-word in the Gospel." I answered, "Say the contrary, please. Everything that is in the Gospel was repeated in the impersonal life."'

She shares Jean's sympathy for the poor and cynicism about political solutions. The rich state of Morelos used to belong to three or four "richards" 'grossly rich people,' but after the Revolution, agriculture has gone to ruin and the poor are miserable:

Les pauvres gens ne sont pas aidés. Ils n'ont pas d'instruments pour labourer, pas de graines pour semer, pas même une chèvre pour donner un peu de lait aux enfants, rien, la misère absolue..." (April 28, 1928)

'The poor people are not helped. They have no tools to work the earth, no seeds to sow, not even a goat to provide a little milk for the children, nothing, absolute misery...'

It is no wonder that the poor turn to bands of brigands and that there are so many disturbances in the countryside. She is, however, far from dewy-eyed; she comments sarcastically on North Americans who "jouent le rôle d'apôtres au milieu des Indiens" 'play the role of apostles among the Indians' and are shamelessly exploited by those they came to help (January 23, 1928).

The most deeply felt expressions of religion in Anne's letters concern God's providential care. When their plans to leave for New York encounter problems, she writes: "Enfin, tout ceci est entre les mains de Dieu; n'arrivera que ce qu'il voudra qu'il arrive. Patience et résignation" 'In the end, all this is in the hands of God; only that will happen that he wants to happen. Patience and resignation.'<sup>79</sup> In an important passage, she looks back over their years of suffering since the beginning of the war:

Pourquoi t'étonnes-tu de ta facilité à écrire? Rappelle-toi qu'il y a 3 ans le cours Hattmer entier m'est revenu en mémoire comme si je l'avais étudié la veille. Toi et moi avons le cerveau solide, mon fils, la preuve en est dans la manière dont nous avons supporté nos tribulations depuis 15 ans. Dieu nous aide visiblement, c'est pourquoi nous ne devons jamais nous décourager et perdre patience. Nos épreuves prendront fin. Espérons et prions. (May 26, 1928)

'Why are you surprised by your talent for writing? Remember that three years ago the whole Hattmer course returned to my memory as if I had studied it the day before. You and I have solid brains, my son; the proof is in the way we have supported our tribulations these last fifteen years. God helps us visibly, which is why we must never be discouraged or impatient. Our trials will come to an end. Let us hope and pray.'

Charlot had studied mysticism through his teens and had even known an old woman who was a mystic of an almost medieval type. His judgment on his mother's religion, quoted above, must be understood very precisely: "As the world she had known and its pomps gradually left her, this piety deepened to a hue of valid mysticism, but that phase came later on, towards the end" (*Born Catholics* 1954: 99).

Anne was more than an amateur in art, a fact of decisive importance for Jean. She studied at the Académie Julian and the Grande Chaumière and with Jean-Léon Gérôme, who took a special interest in her, as Charlot remembered.<sup>80</sup> Not only would his parents be able to recognize and support his talent, but she provided him with the living example of an artist:

I think both of them helped a great lot, or I should say, both of them oriented me towards drawing and painting. My mother was a painter who had gone through a number of the Academies of the time, which would mean around...when she was in her teens, that is, still at the end of the eighties. She had gone to academies, and she had worked under some of the academic masters. I think Gérôme was one of them and Gérôme had taken a particular interest in her work. And she had on the walls of her studio a nude done from the model that had been admired by Gérôme. I think he had in part touched up one of the arms to show her how things should be done. And she did some paintings that were exhibited at the salon that were singled out, and so on, and they were around in our Paris house; and in Poissy, the summer house of my grandfather, there were some pictures that she had done, and she had a little studio in summer there that was full of the paraphernalia of studios in the nineteenth century with plaster casts, easels, and so on, and she did a number of sketches or portraits of myself when I was young. I don't know what happened to the portraits, but I remember posing for her. When I say young, I was very young. And of course as soon as I could put my hands on the colors and so on, I started myself along those lines. It seems to be a nice vocation of a sort. (Interview September 15, 1970)

Anne's seriousness about her art prepared Charlot for the many women artists and writers he would meet and write about throughout his life. In Mexico, he took Frida Kahlo seriously, stating that she was the only Mexican artist to escape the influence of the muralists. In the United States, he reminded admirers of Josef Albers that his wife Anni was also an important artist. In Hawai'i, he was comfortable with the majority of women found in art circles. Art was in fact considered a respectable occupation and even profession for women in France (Weisberg and Becker 1999: 117 ff.). Moreover, Charlot began his work in his mother's studio. In a 1961 interview, Charlot stated:

my mother was a painter, and she had a little studio in our summer house where she painted. She was an easel painter, of course, and as I grew up, she would make portraits of me. I was a model, an artist's model, before I became an artist. But I really didn't know better. She had the brushes and the paint there, and when I found which end of the brush to use, I did use it. (Lesley and Hollis: 21)

Charlot could be amused by the idea of his early efforts in his mother's studio. In a review of his own retrospective, he wrote:

I am grateful that my mother was a painter. She proved good at both trades. When an infant, I was permitted to enter her studio on all fours and to mess up all the messable things within range...

Thus did a motherly scrubbing with soap and water destroy my very first paintings—abstractions no doubt—daubed directly upon my own skin. (April 6, 1966)

Anne had learned a good technique and had some talent, but never pushed her art beyond a respectable academicism. She could, however, provide some direct instruction to Charlot: "Recibí mis primeras clases de mi madre, que también era pintora" 'I received my first classes from my mother, who was also a painter' ("Entrevista en la Estación de Radio XED" September 14, 1945). She probably helped the young Charlot with technical problems; for instance, she uses reserves well in her watercolors as he would. Moreover, the subjects she chose suggest she might have influenced Charlot's own interests: a portrait of her great grandfather, *Papa Nito*, studies of architecture, and peasant women in traditional clothing.

More generally, Anne shared a general esthetic sensibility with her son that must have nourished their conversation and relationship. She writes him: "la broderie m'ayant toujours plu comme si c'était une peinture" 'embroidery having always pleased me as if it were painting' (January 23, 1928). She greatly admired Chaplin's *The Circus*:

C'est une merveille et comme je regrettais que tu ne sois pas auprès de moi pour admirer son art, de plus en plus épuré et parfait. Je crois que c'est la meilleure de toutes ses pellicules. On dit toujours cela de la dernière que l'on voit de lui, mais, vraiment, il a là des trouvailles qui sont d'un génie incontestable. (March 30, 1928)

'It's a marvel, and how I regretted that you weren't with me to admire his work, more and more purified and perfect. I think it's the best of all his films. One always says that of the latest of his that one sees, but really, he has some discoveries that belong to an indisputable genius.'

She shared her son's admiration of certain living artists, writing from the Hotel Colón in Cuernavaca: "J'ai de ma fenêtre une superbe vue et à gauche, le beau palmier du jardin Davis me rappelle incessamment notre ami Weston" 'I have from my window a superb view and, to the left, the beautiful palm tree of the Davis garden that reminds me constantly of our friend [Edward] Weston' (April 29, 1928). Above all, she recognized and understood the artistic personality; of some Mexican friends, the Gomez-Mayorga, she writes, "gens charmants, d'une culture exceptionnelle et avec une rare compréhension des natures artistes" 'charming people, of an exceptional culture and with a rare understanding of artist natures' (April 14, 1928).

## Jean Charlot Biography I: Family Background DRAFT 1/30/07 40

Charlot's image of his mother was elevated and religious. The Charlots' friends in Mexico, with whom they socialized, were impressed by her culture and refinement, and the evening parties she presided over were appreciated. Edward Weston wrote:

Madame Charlot served Jean and me one of her delectable suppers—'Mexican,' she called the meal, but methinks it had a marked French accent! (Weston 1961: 102)

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,—cultured, 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.<sup>81</sup>

[The death of Charlot's mother] a blow to him,—they were inseparable. Such a triste note. (Weston 1961: 116)

In an interview, Charlot stated:

...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 her 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...

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. (June 12, 1971)

Anne's letters show that she had in equal measure the Parisian toughness and sarcasm. She can use extremely rough language, referring to someone as "La mère Rincon" and asking "Qu'est-ce qu'elle y fiche???" (March 31 (b), 1928). She says someone in Guadalajara "s'embête comme un rat mort" 'is as bored as a dead rat' (March 31 (a), 1928).<sup>82</sup> She can be very sardonic about their friends: "Pablito m'a avoué qu'il avait porté la lettre à Amelia del Rio à sept heures et demi du soir. Il devient un peu trop mexicain" 'Dear Pablo [O'Higgins] confessed to me that he had taken the letter to Amelia del Rio at 7:30

PM. He's becoming a little too Mexican' (January 23, 1928). She tells the kind of stories Jean himself resisted:

Le jeune hacendado attend l'arrivée de Diego pour lui déclarer l'amour fulgurant qu'il ressent pour sa femme et l'autorisation de l'épouser !!! Je pense que Lupe veut être veuve avant la lettre; je m'imagine que Diego le fera passer par la fenêtre d'un bon coup de poing. (April 14, 1928)

'The young rancher is awaiting the arrival of Diego to declare the tumultuous love that he feels for his wife and authorization to marry her!!! I think Lupe wants to be a widow before her time; I imagine Diego will make him fly out the window by a good punch.'

Her serious criticisms are devastating:

C'est une franche égoïste et ne pense qu'au 'business' avec l'art comme marchepied. Si tu avais vu tout le bazar qu'elle a emporté !!! Tes illusions seraient tombées, comme les miennes. Quel ridicule a été cette exposition !!! (March 31 (a), 1928)

'She's an open egoist and thinks only of *business* with art as a stepping-stone. If you had seen the bazaar she brought with her!!! Your illusions would have fallen like mine. What an object of ridicule that exhibition was!!!'

Anne is equally disgusted that she and her son are so stupid about business. A Mexican is enriching himself off a North American buyer whom the Charlots have been helping for free: "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).

Far from Jean's defensiveness about Mexico, Anne allowed herself to wax sarcastic: "Mexico est plus triste et plus embêtant que jamais. Complots, arrestations, crimes, asaltos, c'est le pain du jour" 'Mexico is sadder and more exasperating than ever. Plots, arrests, crimes, assaults, it's the daily bread' (March 3, 1928). The tone in her letters, which were written just before leaving Mexico, certainly reflects the exasperation of someone who has overstayed: she loved Mexico, but is now ready to leave, "et j'en ai vraiment assez" 'I've really had enough'; "J'ai *soupié* des mexicains, et surtout des mexicaines ! Oh ! là là !" 'I'm fed up with Mexicans and especially Mexican women' (March 31 (b), 1928). Moreover, the political situation is very bad. The government censors the media, but the bad news is spread by word of mouth:

Je crois que c'est le début seulement et qu'il se passera ici la même chose qu'en Russie, à moins qu'un bon tremblement de terre n'engloutisse d'une fois tout ce pays sans Dieu. (April 1, 1928)

'I believe it's only the beginning, that the same thing will happen here as in Russia, unless a good earthquake doesn't swallow up in one gulp this whole godless country.'

A Parisian can always find occasion for comment in a third-world country:

Le 5, réveil à 6 h. du matin par 80 coups de canon ! J'ai cru que la révolution recommençait. J'ai appris que le général commandant la place recevait solde pour 1500 hommes et qu'il en avait seulement 300, partageant avec le gouverneur le boni restant. Ceci expliquerait le peu d'efficacité dans la poursuite des brigands des grands chemins. C'est d'un Mexicain achevé. On a pendu sur la route d'ici à Mexico l'assassin du docteur Jouvenel, avec ordre de le laisser exposé jusqu'à ce "qu'il tombe en pourriture" pour donner l'exemple à ceux qui auraient envie d'assassiner les voyageurs !! Naturellement, les touristes sont ceux qui ont été épouvantés, sinon les brigands et sur plusieurs plaintes, on a dû décrocher le pendu. Et l'histoire recommence. Mexico sera toujours Mexico. (May 11, 1928)

'On the fifth, wake-up call at 6:00 AM by eighty canon shots. I thought the Revolution was starting up again. I learned that the local commanding general was getting pay for 1500 men when he only had 300, sharing the remainder with the governor. This would explain the low efficiency in the pursuit of highwaymen. It's all perfectly Mexican. The murderer of Dr. Jouvenel was hanged on the road from here to Mexico, with the order to leave him exposed until "he rots" to provide an example for those who would like to murder travelers!! Naturally, the tourists were the ones who were horrified, not the brigands, and after several complaints, the hanged man was unhooked. And the story starts up again. Mexico will always be Mexico.'

Anne's depreciation of Mexico and, in the same letters, her enthusiasm for the cultural opportunities awaiting them in New York may have been intended to comfort her son, who was very sorry to leave the second country he called his own.

Jean was early recognized as an exceptional child, both talented and attractive, and was *dorloté* 'coddled' by the immediate and extended family. In the 1930s, he reacted strongly to a story told by Zohmah's friend, Prudence Plowe, about a boy who had been spoiled because his family thought him a genius; he had ended by doing nothing. Charlot said such treatment was always dangerous, which suggests, I believe, that he himself had overcome its disadvantages, while profiting from the family's attention and support.

In the immediate family, the person who often found herself left out was Odette (June 16, 1895–June 6, 1977), who felt unloved by her mother and eclipsed by her brother. Even late in her life, she would speak to me with wounded feelings about her mother. As a child, she had made a miniature garden with pebbled paths; when she showed it to her mother, Anne remarked, "It lacks only the plaster gnomes." Jean, Odette felt, was attractive, amiable, and sparkling with wit; she herself was ugly, graceless, and plodding. Moreover, her aspirations were not artistic. She wanted to study medicine, but her family forbade it as unbecoming a young woman of good family. She fell in love with a sailor, but the family forbade the match because he was from the laboring classes. Odette's appropriate marriage then

proved a disaster. After her father's death, she was not allowed to help with the deteriorating business affairs because she was a young woman, although she was marginally more capable than either her mother or her brother. She remembered with anguish how they were selling off the family furniture to make ends meet.

Odette was clearly a young woman with modern aspirations that were incomprehensible to her family. In this, she was an early example of the dilemma of young bourgeois women in France: their prescribed social roles no longer fit their higher level of education and ambition (Duroselle 1972: 78). Anne had been trained formally in art, an acceptable accomplishment for women. Odette was provided with a more academic education, earning her baccalaureat in 1911. This may have been the result of Henri's desire to provide his family with a means of earning a living. Once Odette was independent, she began to study medicine, still an unconventional occupation for women; she told my brother Martin that the only other woman she knew in the field was Madame Marie Curie (1867-1934; Martin Charlot, personal communication, May 14, 1999). Odette received a degree in urology and worked in a medical laboratory.<sup>83</sup> She was proud of her work in the field and spoke to me often of her respected colleagues. She continued throughout her life to pursue studies in other fields like botany.

The pain Odette felt was acute because she was intensely *famille*, very much a person who depended on family love and who devoted herself to the family. She assumed the responsibility for her grandfather when her mother left for Mexico, and to the end of her life, she helped tirelessly any relative who needed her, including me. When she was old, she had a whole group of even older relatives and friends for whom she would shop and run errands. After the failure of her marriage, she threw herself for many years into social work, devoting herself to those in the lowest depths of Paris. She worked in a laboratory that tested the cheapest prostitutes for venereal disease and later in a laboratory for urology. She would pay regular visits to the sick and dying whom she met in her work. One story she told me was of a twelve-year-old girl dying of tuberculosis who asked her help in putting on some make-up so she would look less pale for her father, who was visiting her for the last time before leaving Paris for his home elsewhere in France.

Such activities won her gratitude and even friendship. I met several of Odette's friends in Paris, who appreciated her dynamism and wide range of interests. Odette had, however, character traits that often made it difficult for her to elicit the loving response she so desired. Her good works were impelled by an energy that was often extremely tiresome and could be overwhelming. Once when she wanted my mother to go somewhere, she grabbed her by the arm, applied her shoulder to her body, and actually shoved. When she returned from a trip to America, she announced to her family that she had ten hours of slides to show them and was surprised when few were willing to see them. Connected to this energy was a fund of anger that she could put into action. The second wife of Odette's divorced husband told Arlette, Odette's daughter and her stepdaughter, that she could never have imagined that anyone could be as continually cruel as Odette had been to them. She could maintain a campaign of small annoyances with people she disliked but could not attack, such as Arlette's husband, Maurice. Throughout her life, Odette was oblivious to the flaws that made her a difficult companion, for instance, monopolizing conversations with long stories. Once in the early 1960s, a conversation was more balanced during a dinner with Jean

Bardin, a charming friend of hers; afterwards she complained that he just would not stop talking and that she had not been able to get in a word.

The infrequency of her letters to her mother in Mexico may have been an expression of anger. Anne complained to Jean: “Je lis et relis tes lettres et ai entouré ma grande glace de tous tes portraits. Tu [?] seul m’intéresse au monde, puisque ma fille ne me donne plus signe de vie” ‘I read and reread your letters and have surrounded my big mirror with all your portraits. You alone interest me in this world, since my daughter gives me no sign of life’ (March 16, 1928); “De Paris silence de tous” ‘From Paris, silence from all’ (April 1, 1928). In the one letter from Odette that survives, she has been pushed by her grandfather and may be ironizing slightly about her mother’s situation:

Bon Papa me bouscule pour que je t’envoie de suite sa lettre. J’en profite pour te mettre ces quelques lignes en réponse à tes 2 lettres reçues la semaine dernière. Nous sommes contents de te savoir *fermière* dans le luxe agréable et sous un climat ensoleillé. (March 25, 1926)

‘Grampa pushes me to send you a postscript to his letter. I take advantage of the fact to set down these few lines in response to your two letters received last week. We are happy to know you are a *gentlewoman farmer* in agreeable luxury and in a sunny climate.’

After the death of his mother, Charlot wrote Odette:

Nous avons renoncé à correspondre avec toi après ton silence de ces 2 dernières années et sans adresse connue. Ta lettre, quoique arrivée dans un moment si dur pour moi, m’a fait plaisir parcequ’elle vient de toi...

‘We had given up corresponding with you after your silence of these last two years and because we did not know your address. Your letter, although it arrived at such a hard moment for me, pleased me because it comes from you...’

Odette apparently revealed her excuse, as Charlot wrote Brenner:

Recibi malas noticias de Francia : Mi hermana tuvo que divorciarse y anda muy mal de dinero – y con su niña. No queria que lo supiera mi Maman y hay dos años que no habia escrito -- y ya tengo nuevas responsabilidades de este lado. (“Todavía no estoy bien”)

‘I received bad news from France: My sister had to get a divorce and is having serious money problems—and she has a little girl. She didn’t want my mother to know, so it has been two years since she has written—and now I have new responsibilities on that side.’

In a letter sent September 30, 1940, Charlot is unsure of her address.

Odette’s forceful and ambivalent personality made it difficult for her to establish and maintain the loving relations she needed so intensely and so obviously. She clung, therefore, to those family

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members from whom she felt affection: her father and grandfather, later her daughter, Arlette; and from 1955, me. But perhaps the most important person of this group was her brother, Jean; that is, any resentment that she felt of his superior gifts and favored status was directed towards her mother. Odette felt the same love and admiration for Jean as their parents, family, and friends. She had no complaints whatsoever of his actions at any stage of his life. Most important, she felt that Jean had used his influence on her behalf. She told me that her life in the family would have been horrible, an *enfer* 'hell,' if Jean had not been so nice to her. When I asked her what she meant, she said that he had always and effectively taken her side in family frictions.

Jean's actual feelings about Odette were, however, negative as well as positive. She was three years older than Jean and very much the overbearing older sister. When I asked him once about Odette, the one story he told me was significant. As a little boy, he was playing by himself, and Odette, who was already interested in medicine, came to him in her made-up nurse's uniform and asked him to play doctor and patient. She then hit his arm until it bled so that she could bandage it. When he was even younger, Odette induced him to eat worms from the garden (Martin Charlot July 25, 1998). One of the childhood notes he kept was an undated apology from Odette:

Mon cher Jean

Je te demande bien pardon d'avoir été méchante toute à l'heur [*sic*]. Si tu savait [*sic*]

comme j'ai du chagrin

ta petite sœur qui t'aime bien

Odette Charlot

My dear Jean

I ask your forgiveness for being mean just now. If you knew how bad I feel

your little sister who loves you very much

My mother felt that one reason Jean did not return to France was his ambivalence about Odette—at least seeing her there was no inducement—and that he let other family members assume most of the responsibility of entertaining her when she visited the family in Hawai'i in the 1960s. When after that visit, Odette wanted to move to Hawai'i, both my parents opposed her plan, which enraged Odette and prompted her to change her will.

That Charlot himself had wounded family feelings is clear from the fact that he could remember the good times he and his sister had playing together. In his notebook of 1907 is a note by Odette:

*Paris le 11 Mai 1907*

Je brevete l'invention de M<sup>sieur</sup> Jean Charlot qui est de faire un magasin de papeterie

rédacteur

O Charlot      J Charlot

*Paris, May 11, 1911*

I grant a patent to the invention of Mr. Jean Charlot, which is to start a stationery store

editor

Charlot's relationship with Odette influenced the development of his personality, as will be discussed below.

The servants were an important part of the Charlot household,<sup>84</sup> and the young Jean had a close relationship with several of them. The infant Jean was given a wetnurse, Mrs. Le Nohan, who lived near Poissy:

it was a very natural thing at the time for the ladies to bring in a peasant woman to give the breast to the child, and that happened to me. The woman was from Poissy, incidentally, so that later on as I grew up, I would visit with her. I knew the family. When her own child grew up, we went to the... were invited to the festivities for the first communion, and I even went and stayed with her when I was perhaps fifteen or sixteen for some days at her little house and yard. So that there was a sort of continuous friendship that remained between us. I think that I cannot remember my thoughts as an infant, if I had any thoughts, but she was a woman of great poise and good sense and probably, I suppose, the proper type of the women that I painted later on, be they Mexican Indians or perhaps Hawaiian gourd players and so on. That is, she was close to the earth, close to the soil, certainly more than the people who were more at ease in a *salon* at the time. There was specially something terrifically artificial in the women of a certain, well, economic status or class, and they were so heavily dressed and corseted and perfumed and so on that I think I enjoyed the good earth smell of my wet nurse, which I do remember indeed, as a contrast to the more exquisite perfumes that the ladies would drench themselves in. (Interview October 31, 1970)

Charlot visited Mrs. Le Nohan and her husband, "le père Nohan," for several days in July 1916, between the declaration of war and his induction into the army; while on that visit, he made a pencil portrait of each.<sup>85</sup> The relationship was important for Charlot. When I asked him about the origins of his subjective themes, as opposed to his objective ones, he replied:

Well, I don't know, Johnny. The fact that they are subjective makes it very difficult to analyze the birth of those things. But I am sure that when I was a child, I had a wet nurse, as a little French boy chanced to have at the time, and it may very well be that my contact as an infant with my nurse's breast gave me a certain idea of sensuousness, a certain entrance into a knowledge of Greek art, for example, and so on. I mean, those things are truly subjective and it's perhaps better not to put them into words. (Interview October 1, 1970)

As a child, Charlot spent much time in the sociable atmosphere of the staff in the kitchen:

Of course, I loved to go to the kitchen, and knowing the pots and pans, and smell things, and see the preparations for meals or—yearly wonderful thing—the making of jams, which were done in great big copper pans. (Interview October 31, 1970)

Kitchens in such large houses were warm and occupied by adult conversation and activity. I remember myself that when Luz Jiménez was working in our various homes in Mexico in 1945 to 1947, the kitchen was the liveliest room, and I hung around for hours enjoying the bustle and the chat. Charlot certainly enjoyed the human contact—he would later have his first sexual stirrings in connection with women servants—but the French kitchen provided also a cultural contact. Cooks and other servants were from peasant families and continued to wear their traditional costumes, which Charlot very much appreciated. When he portrayed two cooks in *Juvenilia 1904* (475a recto) and in his first oil, *Mathilde* (1911), he emphasized their peasant hats, as he did with the bath attendants at Royat in his *Sketchbook 1905 (1907)*. He also did several pictures of the back door of the kitchen.

These interests are the basis for his extensive development of subjects around the Mexican kitchen and the daily work of Indian women, to which he was introduced when Luz Jiménez brought him into her family at Milpa Alta. The connection was very clear for Charlot (Interview October 31, 1970) : “And the cook *would* go to market in Poissy with a basket, very much the way the Mexican cooks go to market with their baskets.” Indeed, all his life, Charlot would pay unusual attention to the role of women. In Hawai’i, women constitute at least half of his subjects. He was also a pioneer in recognizing the importance of the missionary wives in his mural *Early Contacts of Hawaii with Outer World* (1951–1952), now a subject of much study. In Fiji, where men seem to dominate society, Charlot sought out subjects in which he could feature women. All of Charlot’s Guatemala subjects are women engaged in various activities. Part of Charlot’s interest was cultural. The work of women is not only central to a culture, but, as in the case of Mexico, often changes less through cultural contact than the work of men. Moreover, as a creator himself of physical objects, Charlot was always interested in people’s work—what they made—and he was impressed by the constant and important work that women did. He found a confirmation of his view in the indigenous art of Mexico:

That is, when I was looking at the Mexico of my day and of the actual people doing the house chores, I had at the back of my head the vision of the manuscripts, of the drawings of the ancient Aztec painters, representing similar movements, similar motifs, some five hundred, six hundred years before. I was very impressed when I was in Yucatan doing the copies of the columns of the Temple of the Warriors—there were perhaps three hundred drawings of bas-reliefs there—to find that one of the signs—which, of course, wasn’t Aztec, it was Mayan—but to illustrate the verb *action* or the verb *accomplishment*, there was a hand of a woman, just the wrist and the hand of the woman holding the roller, the stone roller, and rolling the dough on the *metate*. It’s of course not exactly representational, it is just a hieroglyph, like an Egyptian hieroglyph, but it was such a summing up of so many things that I had stored in my mind and exteriorized in my pictures that it was interesting there to see that in the temple that may have dated of the thirteenth century. The Aztecs in Mexico in some temples and the Mayans in that particular Temple of the Warriors had come more or less to the same conclusions that I had come to when they think of summing up in one gesture the verb *action* in terms essential to Indian life.<sup>86</sup>

The importance of experience and observation cannot be overestimated in Charlot's art. Generally, he had to see something to develop it as a subject for his art. He could depict male Mexican burden bearers, actors, and dancers once he had seen them. He knew that the Mexican pyramids had been built by men, but he needed to see the activity itself during the reconstructions at Chich'en Itza in order to begin his series of Maya workers. Charlot depicted women's activities because he had observed them with interest and respect, a respect that reinforced his sympathy for indigenous peoples and the working class and his corresponding negative feelings about the rich and powerful.

Charlot was also surrounded by playmates: his sister Odette, cousins like Jules Briancon and relatives from Mexico, and children who were not members of the family. In *Juvenilia 1904* (61 verso), an older hand has drawn a party of children at a table with people and animals labeled; Charlot is among them. Pierre Marquet collaborated with Charlot on his puppet theatre and in the club of children interested in aviation that produced the newsletter *Les Airts*. In a note, Odette mentions: "le prsident Lemaire, un de nos amis de jeunesse, devenu 2<sup>e</sup> magistrat de France, dcd en janvier 1969" 'President Lemaire, one of our childhood friends, become second magistrate of France, died in January 1969.' Charlot would later socialize with his school acquaintances. Altogether, Charlot lived the full social life of a French child. Like his family connections, ties of friendship would continue late into Charlot's life.<sup>87</sup>

Charlot grew up surrounded by the arts of many cultures both in his immediate and in his extended family. All French upper-middle-class families had collections of European art, usually academic. The connections to Jean-Paul Laurens (March 28, 1858–March 23, 1921) and Carolus Duran, mentioned above, indicate that the family had relations with the academic art world, which would be normal for the student Anne. Several small landscapes by Aston Knight, a conservative American painter living in Paris, have survived in the family (collection David Charlot). Knight, the son of the painter Ridgeway Knight, was born in Paris in 1873 and had a respectable career, being accepted by salons and winning prizes. A photograph, probably of his studio, shows his conservative landscapes, for which he was best known, and is inscribed:

A Monsieur Jean Charlot en souvenir de sa visite à l'atelier de son ami

Aston Knight

9 mai 1906

'For Mr. Jean Charlot in memory of his visit to the studio of his friend

Aston Knight

May 9, 1906'

Charlot was eight years old at the time, but apparently impressed the artist as intellectually more mature. Charnay could take Charlot to meet Boban because he would profit by the experience more than the ordinary child. Charlot's own childhood memories reveal him as sensitive, observant, and thoughtful beyond his years. In fact, although most of his life Charlot appeared younger than he was, he impressed people with his unusual intellectual authority; for instance, the Mexican artists seem to speak of him as an

older teacher when in fact he was among the youngest in the group. On his side, Charlot would form intense relationships with older people, like the mystic Mademoiselle Marchais in Paris, Agnes Meyer in Washington, D.C., and Jennie Wilson in Hawai'i.

Henri had a number of Russian artworks in the house, and Odette had Mucha's *Four Seasons* on her bedroom wall (Tabletalk January 13, 1979). Charlot could view and be impressed by a beautiful Impressionist painting by (Louis)Eugène Boudin (1824–1898) in the home of one of his uncles (Interview October 31, 1970) and had discussions with an uncle who preferred—and collected—Eugène Carrière over Gauguin (Tabletalk ca. 1972). The most impressive and distinctive collections were those of Mexican Indian art that Charlot found in the homes of his grandfather Louis and his grand-uncle Eugène (Interview September 28, 1970). Later in Mexico, Charlot would study collections of European and Mexican Indian art in the homes of his uncles Louis Labadie and Aristide Martel.

The Charlots had also in their home many examples of Chinese art, probably due to Henri's trade with China. Brocade, ceramics, and carved ink blocks have been passed down in the family. Copies of Chinese artworks in various hands are found in Charlot's early sketchbook, *Juvenilia 1904*.<sup>88</sup> Charlot seems also to have read and been impressed by translations of Chinese writings on art.<sup>89</sup> Charlot retained a lifelong interest in Chinese art, taking advantage of any opportunities to study it. In New York City in the 1930s, he explored the magnificent holdings of a friend, the dealer Frank Caro. In Hawai'i, he started learning Chinese and wrote essays on the work of his colleague, Tseng Yu-ho, Betty Ecke.

More influential on Charlot was his early contact with Japanese art. The first drawing he made of a person was a copy of a man with a sword by Hokusai, which he found in his father Henri's copy of Samuel Bing's *Le Japon Artistique* (1888; Morse 1976: 6). Henri had in fact a special appreciation of the Japanese and their culture. Charlot's mother wrote him in March 1928:

Ton pauvre papa appréciait beaucoup les Japonais, il les trouvait fins et charmants, intelligents et très compréhensifs; tu vas pouvoir juger par toi-même s'il avait raison.

'Your poor papa appreciated the Japanese very much. He found them fine and charming, intelligent and very understanding. You will be able to judge for yourself if he was right.'

Again, Charlot continued to study Japanese art throughout his life, focusing on *yamato-e*, the indigenous tradition, rather than artists more imitative of the Chinese. He later connected the boisterous animal and genre art of Japan to types of Gothic art (*AA I 359 f.*).

Less typically, Charlot's family appreciated folk arts. Charlot referred often to his family's cabinet of nineteenth-century Mexican curios, and the influence they had on his own work.<sup>90</sup> The collection stemmed from his great-grandfather, Victor Goupil, and was carefully preserved and passed down as seen in a note by Odette on the cardboard covering of two photographs of the glass cabinet in which it was kept:

photographies de ma vitrine, restée comme Bon Papa me l'a donnée, en me disant "Je te la donne intacte telle que mon père me l'a donnée." Elle m'est sacrée et personne,

pas même Arlette, n’a jamais eu le droit de toucher à un seul objet de ce don de mon bien-aimée Amabobo.

‘photographs of my glassed cabinet, remaining as Grampa gave it to me, saying, “I give it to you intact just as it was when my father gave it to me.” It is sacred to me, and no one, not even Arlette, has ever had the right to touch a single object of this gift of my much-loved Amabobo.’

Also passed down in the family was much lace of a Mexican type called *blonde* or *blonda*, “made only of unbleached natural-color silk” (Calderón de la Barca 1966: 668, editors’ note 34), probably made by the women of the family as they conversed. In 1945, Zohmah Charlot wrote to her friend Prudence Plowe from Mexico City, where Charlot was doing research for *The Mexican Mural Renaissance*:

Jean cut colored tissue papers into beautiful scenes which we hung on the walls. He says when he was little his grandfather had brought from Mexico beautiful cut-out tissue papers, so he had always made them, though he had never seen the same ones in Mexico.

Charlot always loved Mexican children’s toys and gave them to his children, showing us how to work them: “remember those finger toys papa would play with us...you couldn’t get your fingers out when you pulled” (Ann Charlot email, June 13, 2004). The family owned more conventional artworks from Mexico as well. The family interest in folk art extended to other cultures. Charlot first learned about the French folk prints, the Images d’Epinal, of which he would make a large collection, when his grandfather Louis gave him some modern versions (Interview October 22, 1970).

Charlot’s exposure to art reached beyond the home. The family lived in Paris with its unparalleled educational possibilities. After their marriage, Henri and Anne moved into 28, Rue de Bondy (now the rue René Boulanger), which was probably a property owned by Louis. Victor had lived at number 66 and left extensive holdings in the street and neighborhood in his estate. Odette and Jean were born at the rue de Bondy, but the family soon moved to 64, rue de la Chaussée d’Antin, where they occupied the upper floors of a five-story building with attic. The Chaussée d’Antin is in the ninth *arrondissement*, just north of the Opéra on the right bank, and is filled with imposing, mostly nineteenth-century buildings.<sup>91</sup> The area was, at the time, a high-rent district occupied by “grands bourgeois” ‘upper middle class,’ who were making or had made their money in commerce. Henri Charlot used more than one lower floor of the building as his business office, putting its address on his stationery. Charlot referred to someone “on the stairs going up or down in my father’s office” (Interview June 12, 1971). In their apartment, the Charlots conducted the intense social life of the French upper-middle class, frequently receiving family members, colleagues, and friends. Unusually for the time—and an indication of the special character of the Charlot family—the children were included in these gatherings, allowing the young Jean to meet interesting people of different professions and nationalities and participate in their conversations.

The Chaussée d'Antin was a good address, and when asked which part of Paris he came from, Charlot would usually say "Porte d'Orléans" rather than his Paris street or Saint Mandé. The corner of the Charlot's building was cut off to create a splayed or three-sided façade, with the central, cut-off section overlooking the street crossing with the Rue de la Victoire. The windows of this middle façade looked south down the Chaussée d'Antin towards the end of the street where it is cut by the Boulevard des Capucines. They also looked west down the Rue de la Victoire to the place where it is cut off diagonally by the Rue Joubert; this is the five-minute route that Charlot later took to the Lycée Condorcet, which in fact was originally called the Lycée de la Chaussée d'Antin. Charlot used the views from the upper floors of this façade for some of his childhood cityscapes. From the windows and two shallow balconies of the south façade, one could look east down the Rue de la Victoire; the most distinctive feature of this view was the thin profile of the stone arch at the top of the façade of the Synagogue de la rue de la Victoire. From the windows of the identical balconies on the west façade, one could look north along the last block of the Chaussée d'Antin to the Place d'Estienne d'Orves at which the street ended. On the far side of the square, facing into the Chaussée d'Antin, was a small park, where Charlot was taken to play,<sup>92</sup> and behind it, the Eglise de la Sainte Trinité, the family's parish church. From this location, Charlot could reach many cultural destinations on foot, and he recalled how much he enjoyed walking in Paris.

Charlot remembered his many childhood visits to museums<sup>93</sup> and being taken by his mother and grandfather to lectures. He also saw a performance by the Isadora Duncan dance troupe and watched Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, on a European tour, where he was impressed by the horse riding, with cowboys chasing Indians around the ring.<sup>94</sup> He was taken to the small rooms that were the early movie theatres and remembered people ducking as a train was shown rolling into the station.<sup>95</sup> He attended the Ballets Russes, which performed in Paris from 1909 on. He remembered that, from his seat, he was impressed by a huge jewel in the set; taken backstage, he was surprised that, close up, it was such an obvious paste fake. He considered this experience an impressive lesson in stage-craft, which he was practicing with his puppet theatre. Charlot took his own children to cultural events, when we were very young, probably recalling how much they had meant to him at the same age.

In 1928, his mother looked forward to the cultural opportunities they would have in New York, words that certainly reflect the life she had led in Paris:

*Les musées, galeries et bibliothèques sont, dit-on, merveilleux; cours et conférences partout, et en toutes les langues; bref, une ambiance intellectuelle et artistique qui nous a bien manquée depuis que nous sommes au Mexique. (Lundi [March 19, 1928])*

*'The museums, galleries, and libraries are, they say, marvelous; courses and conferences everywhere and in all languages; in brief, an intellectual and artistic ambiance that we have very much missed since we are in Mexico.'*

*Nous reprendrons pied dans une ville civilisée et noyau d'art mondial ce qui nous changera du tout au tout. Que de choses à regarder ! J'aurai l'air de revenir de Pontoise !! (April 29, 1928)*

*'We will settle in a civilized city and a center of world art, which will be a complete*

change for us. How many things to see! I will give the impression of returning from Pontoise [the provinces]!!’

When I knew Odette in the 1950s and 1960s, she was continually taking advantage of the many cultural opportunities of Paris. Charlot stated (Interview September 15, 1970): “I was haunting the Louvre on weekends when I was very young.” Towards the end of his life, Charlot stated that growing up in Paris helped him understand Daumier better than those who knew the city less well: “I *do* have some advantages” (Tabletalk July 20, 1977). Both artists could see what, Baudelaire complained, most could not: “La vie parisienne est féconde en sujets poétiques et merveilleux” ‘Parisian life is rich in poetic and marvelous subjects’ (Baudelaire 1961: 952). Indeed, Charlot would state (March 8, 1972): “Because influences were received by me when I was very young, I have one thing for which I’m grateful, and that is, I was born and raised in Paris.” Charlot truly loved Paris, especially, “that part of Paris which was mine, that is, from the Quartier de l’Opéra to the Rue Bonaparte”; that is, from their home, past the Louvre, to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts.<sup>96</sup> In fact, one of the reasons he hesitated to return to France was his fear that it might have changed:

La France dont je me rappelle est celle d’avant la première Guerre, et je suppose n’existe plus. Si je retourne en France, je ne sais même pas si je serais à l’aise.<sup>97</sup>

‘The France I remember is the one from before the first war, and I suppose it doesn’t exist any more. If I return to France, I don’t even know whether I’ll be comfortable.’

When he did return in 1968 to attend my wedding—“Cela me fait plaisir qu’il épouse une française !” ‘I’m really pleased he’s marrying a Frenchwoman” (undated letter to Odette)—he wandered the streets and the places he had known and was happy to say that he found that Paris “had not lost its dignity.” Shortly thereafter, my mother wrote Odette (June 13, 1970): “we would like to come to Paris regularly.” On the other hand, Charlot’s familiarity with Paris preserved him from a certain snobbery: “Now I’ve never had that idea that Paris was a sort of a center of the world, for me anyhow, maybe because I was born and raised there” (Interview October 10, 1970); “Born and raised in Paris, he is thus one of the few artists who do not feel the lure of Paris” (Blurb for Morse print catalog).

Nonetheless, Paris demonstrated the public and social character of the arts, from the highest to the lowest. Statues were found not just in museums, but in the street; paintings, from murals to framed oils, were visible in churches; and music and theatre were available in public parks. Moreover, most of those works of art communicated messages to the people, rather than being mere decoration. Charlot’s image of the artist as a public speaker was supported by his childhood experience of art, an image intensified in his decision to be a liturgical artist. Finally, the many different artworks of Paris were creations of their historical times and places, which they expressed and elucidated. Charlot would never study an artwork as an esthetic isolate; the connoisseur was inseparable from the ethnographer and historian. From earliest childhood, Charlot lived with Asian and Mexican art and encountered Egyptian art at the Louvre. He was forced to confront the challenge of understanding and appreciating other cultures as well as his own, which ultimately demanded the creation of an interdisciplinary, multicultural perspective. That is, he had to see all art as fully human and all humans as essentially creative.

The urban experience of Paris was balanced by the rural one of Poissy, a small town of approximately six thousand inhabitants, some twenty kilometers to the west of the capital. Now a victim of modern sprawl and connected to Paris by a twenty-minute rapid train ride, Poissy in Charlot's time seemed distant in time as well as space. Farms and pastures bordered the town, tended by their traditional caretakers. Indeed, Poissy was famous for its peasant life, the farmers adhering to their customs, clothing, and way of speaking, which attracted the admiring attention of artists (Weinberg 1991: 66). From these families, the bourgeois drew their servants and provided their children with the experience of living intimately and affectionately with people of a different class and even culture; as seen above, Charlot took full advantage of this opportunity.

The famous church, La Collégiale Notre-Dame de Poissy, a masterpiece of architecture, was three to five minutes away on foot from the Charlots' house.<sup>98</sup> Started around 1016 and built for the most part in the twelfth century, the Collégiale occupies the transition from Romanesque to Gothic. Modifications in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and nineteenth centuries (a typically creative restoration by Viollet-le-Duc), introduced other periods, making the church an illustration of the history of French art and its cumulative effect. The church contains artworks from the course of its long history, including a late Gothic *Saint Barbara*, patroness of gunners—whom Charlot used as the subject of a 1917 print when he himself was in the artillery (Morse number 8)—and a good nineteenth-century oil painting, *Le Martyre de Saint Barthélémy*, based on the painting of the same subject by the Spanish artist José de Ribera (1588–1652): the long, splayed arms create a dramatic geometric composition. The Collégiale contains also the baptismal font used for Louis IX, Saint Louis of France, on the day of his birth, April 25, 1214. Across the square from the church is the towered, massive medieval entrance to the Enclos de l'Abbaye, the abbey enclosure, with its old houses and winding cobblestone streets. In Poissy, Charlot lived in the historical and artistic heart of Catholic France:

the whole church cathedral of Poissy where we were every summer is a beautiful example of Gothic, and I would go in there and absorb really the beauty of the Gothic things, not only the sculptures or the reredos, the sort of cutout wood sculptures that are around the altar, but also the old stones and that feeling of pertaining to the ancient times, of being at ease in ancient centuries. (Interview September 15, 1970)

As I prayed, I soaked in unconsciously a vast segment of history and of art history. (August/September 1959: 23 f.)

The boy Charlot experienced a confirmation of his faith while kneeling in the Collégiale: “the same sturdy pile of quarried stones, more Romanesque than Gothic, where St. Louis of France with his mother Blanche had worshipped” (*Born Catholics* 1954: 99). Charlot felt that the Collégiale:

taught me the dignity of church art... a lesson in the respect of the material used, in the dignity of concept, and—so loyal was each detail to the aims and modalities of the century that had created it—in contemporaneity. (AA I 283)

To bring its art history up-to-date, Poissy had erected a Romantic statue of its most famous modern resident, the academic icon Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier (1815–1891), now displaced—in favor of a statue of St. Louis—from the church square to the Parc Meissonier. Charlot would remember the gob of paint on the bottom edge of the great man’s palette: “his bifurcated, frizzled beard sweeping awry a square palette that, in turn, seemed to drip its load of pigment over the velvet pants of the artist” (*Born Catholics* 1954: 100). Charlot would later describe Meissonier’s strange local doings to depict realistically Napoleon retreating in the snow, such as pouring tons of sugar on the summer fields around Poissy.<sup>99</sup>

The Charlots stayed at the summer home rented by Louis Goupil, the Villa Saint-Louis, at 10, Cours du 14-Juillet.<sup>100</sup> By a curious coincidence, this was the very Villa that Claude Monet had occupied, unhappily, from December 1881 until he moved to Giverny in April 1883.<sup>101</sup> Poissy left Monet uninspired, but he produced a number works there like the drawing *Pêcheurs à Poissy*, 1882, done perhaps on the grassy incline before the house, and the painting *Les Tilleuls à Poissy*, 1882, done from an upper window of the Villa. Charlot later felt he could recognize the locales and had in fact painted several as a child. For instance, he himself painted the *tilleuls*, the lime trees in front of the house, from the ground. Charlot remembered how he enjoyed riding bicycles with his sister between those very trees (Martin Charlot personal communication 1972).

The Villa itself is a three-story building—the third story mansarded—in Louis XVI style with large windows, a modern addition to Poissy, but not of the gaudy sort found elsewhere.<sup>102</sup> A walkway separates the Villa from its similar neighbor on the land side. The front of the Villa faces a broad promenade with street that proceeds east along the left bank of the Seine. Three ranks of lime trees shade the promenade, still covered with light gravel. In Monet’s and Charlot’s time, the leafy branches were cut square; now they are allowed to grow into their natural bushy shapes. To the land side of the trees was a long, sparsely grassed place, now divided into streets, parking, and two new rows of trees. The gravel street that led from the church square down past the front of the Villa to the bank of the Seine has now been paved, as has the east-west cross street that bordered the land side of the promenade. At the far end of the promenade is situated the gourmet restaurant l’Esturgeon, founded in 1839 (6, Cours du 14 Juillet), curiously unmentioned by Charlot or in family documents. Along the river side of the promenade was a waist-high fence with crossed bars, beyond which a grassy, inclined bank connected to the Seine—a quiet, sunny spot for anglers and loungers. The Seine-side of the Villa’s fenced-in property enjoys its section of the same incline. In Charlot’s time, the house appears to have had a terrace or at least a walkway of white gravel. The little lawn just westward was called grandly *le pré* ‘the field,’ and was a favorite playground for the children. The yard behind the house had trees for climbing<sup>103</sup> and, at least for a time, a rustic mountain rest station used as a teahouse. Many of these sights appear in family photographs and Charlot’s pictures.

The Villa overlooks, not the full width of the Seine, but a narrow arm formed by a long island parallel to the shore, the Ile de Migneaux. The shore of the island appears very close to that of the mainland. In the restricted space between them, the riverine atmosphere becomes unusually humid, almost tropical. The clear, radiant light of the area around the Collégiale takes on a heavy atmospheric

density. Bushes abound, and trees push their trunks to unusual heights and branch out with a profusion of leaves. Below them, the moving waters reflect all the overhanging colors. Now as then, rowboats and pleasure barges ply the waters or moor themselves for long periods, sometimes in waterfront sheds, and sightseers can enjoy the lush foliage and extraordinary sights like the little island at the east end of the branch, crossed by the Renaissance bridge with an old mill building, and, beyond, the full width of the Seine. Charlot was plunged into this landscape that Monet himself had painted:

I may have been fourteen years old, I think, when I did a little album of landscapes that were all related to reflections in the water. And by looking and trying to copy nature, I realized that those reflections were made of dissimilar colors. Some would reflect the sky, some would reflect the trees, and so on. And I tried in those little watercolors to do things as I had seen them on the Seine, by our Villa St. Louis, which was the name of my grandfather's summer house. And they are certainly the closest things to Impressionism I have ever done, simply by looking at the same scenes that Monet had seen and of course painted in a masterly way in the 1880s. (Interview October 31, 1970)

Charlot was inspired as a person and an artist by Poissy, attaching him essentially to nature and to the people most connected to the land.

The Charlots' cultural interests naturally extended outwards with trips to other parts of France and countries like Belgium and Germany.<sup>104</sup> When Anne and Odette had traveled to Italy in October 1913, they had returned with color reproductions of artworks in Parma that impressed Charlot, including Correggio's *Madonna del San Girolamo*.

at the time there were not so many color reproductions, and she brought in some reproductions in full color, which seems to me a marvelous affair. And of course I had seen and I was seeing some originals of the Italian Renaissance in the Louvre, but the idea of all those beautiful things in Italy impressed me very much. And I think fifty years later or so, or a little more than fifty years later, I was happy when I went to Italy to see those beautiful things.<sup>105</sup>

Moreover, Charlot's contact with other cultures was not merely through art. The Charlots frequently received guests from Mexico, Russia, and Germany (Interview November 18, 1970). The connection between cultures and living people was made early.

Charlot was clearly formed by his immediate family. In later life, he consciously applied details of that family to himself. For instance, when he was in his early fifties, he told me that he thought he would die in that decade of his life because members of his family did. He must have been thinking of his parents, because a long life was more common in the extended family.

Charlot's parents provided the model of a very loving and emotionally united couple. Into his late twenties and early thirties, his poems express an intense desire to achieve a good marriage for himself. The picture he paints is of a simple life with an uncomplicated, pious, and devoted woman and

undemanding and unambitious children—a family content with the rustic life of the country. This view—found in contemporary intellectuals like the poet Francis Jammes—is more escapist than realistic. Charlot’s mother was a strong-minded artist, and Charlot himself was in fact always attracted to unusually complicated and challenging women. Moreover, he later encouraged his own children in all their dreams. But he did insist on one major difference between the marriage he wanted and that of his parents and grandparents: he wanted his spouse to be a Catholic.

Charlot’s idea of marriage was basically bourgeois, with very conventional roles assigned to husband and wife. My mother complained that she married Jean thinking they would lead the bohemian life she wanted and found him settling into a comfortable, bourgeois domesticity. That domesticity was more European than American, reflecting Charlot’s experience of his own immediate family.

Charlot considered himself the head of the household, ultimately responsible for its well-being and major decisions. The father’s responsibility was both material and spiritual. He was responsible for the financial support of his family, which posed a greater difficulty for him as an artist than it did for the ordinary man. Through most of his life, Charlot was unable to support himself on his art alone; the added difficulty of supporting a wife and children seemed insurmountable to him and was the reason for his long hesitation in marrying my mother. Even more, the mental burdens of such a responsibility, he felt, would prevent him from doing his own creative work. Charlot used the theme of *The Sacrifice of Isaac* to wrestle with the problem. Must he sacrifice his desire for a family to his God-given mission as an artist? In several depictions of the subject, a young couple embrace at the bottom of the hill, heedless of the religious conflict occurring above them. Similarly, Charlot felt strongly the responsibility of having children; he developed the theme of *Mr. Boniface* to express how the child “drains the mother of her life strength” (Interview October 31, 1970). His 1970s inscription for his print *Yellow Robe* expresses this view:

Ce vampire potelé  
Suça son sang avec son lait.

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

He thought that Mary Cassatt (1844–1926) was the only other artist to see children this way:

Her pictures of mothers and children are numerous, and tinged by a close to morbid point of view...Unconscious distortions enlarge the child’s body the better to deflate the mother. The sight of the baby feeding on the substance of its maker acquires cruel undertones. (December 14, 1966)

As the mother displays her child, she seems to say, “Look at this big thing I’ve produced!” Charlot felt babies looked like old men; I suspect he meant imperious and demanding as well as in physique. In the event, from the time of his marriage, Charlot’s family duties would conflict significantly with his artistic production.

Charlot felt himself responsible for his family's spiritual welfare, which meant in practice that of his children. We all went to Mass on Sunday and days of obligation, and my father insisted that we children attend Catholic schools, even in Mexico, where they were almost illegal. In Hawai'i, a much better Protestant school had offered us full scholarships, but my mother could not persuade my father to accept them. In this, Charlot went beyond his parents; he himself had been sent to the best schools rather than Catholic ones. As head of the family, my father felt himself fully authorized to make religious decisions. When a priest criticized him for sending me to a non-Catholic university, my father sent him a stiff note saying the decision lay within his own area of responsibility. Charlot's willingness to clash with priests and nuns over his children was surprising in the largely Irish Church of the 1950s. But his attitude was based on a correct theology of the Christian family as well as a French prickliness about intrusive clerics.

Correspondingly, Charlot felt that the household and child rearing were the province of the mother. He wanted his wife to do the necessary work and then he would handle the higher aspects. He expected my mother even to handle discipline. She once heard him tell a child annoying him, "You'd better stop that. Your mother wouldn't like it." When she protested, he said, "But I want them to *like* me!" Discipline was difficult because Charlot disliked confrontation; he did it when he had to, but it always cost him greatly.

My parents communicated very little about their life and thoughts to each other, which my mother later regretted. She gave as an example an incident from their early life in New York City. They answered an advertisement for an apartment but were put off by the doorman because he thought they looked too seedy. My mother knew that my father was hurt, but they did not discuss it; she felt later in life that she should have taken the initiative. In the early 1960s, when a crisis in their relationship threatened, Jean did discuss the matter very seriously with her, saying that he had assumed that she knew and respected his beliefs and actions, but now felt that they had not had the understanding he had imagined. My mother was devastated by the discussion and felt unable to cope with it. Charlot was a person who bottled up his emotions; as a result, they had excessive force when released. A woman I knew once said that I myself was not given a parental example in the usual argumentative give-and-take of an American marriage.

Charlot also did not fit into the very American neighborhood of faculty housing at the University of Hawai'i. In the early 1950s, I had treated a smaller boy in a way that could have been dangerous, and his father came to the house to complain. My father had to scold me in the living room as the man stood at the door. When he finally closed the door, he said, "Do you think I like to scold you in front of people?" He said no more about the offense. He knew I was aware of the seriousness of what I had done, but I was also surprised into thoughtfulness by my father's remark.

The comfort, indeed the luxury, of Charlot's childhood home was important for his personality. He was born into a world of luxurious and complicated clothes, servants, country houses, horses, and vacations; a life enjoyed by a very small minority. This life created the atmosphere of his early years, an atmosphere that can inculcate a very positive and secure sense of identity. He did not have to fantasize

about luxurious living. In fact, my mother told me that my father always felt that he had experienced the peak of good living in his youth in Paris; nothing thereafter seemed as inviting or impressive as the life he had led then. He remembered with amusement that on a visit to a fancy New York restaurant with Paul Claudel, he knew that the Russian dish *coulbiac* should be made with sturgeon rather than with the salmon the chef used (Interview November 28, 1970).<sup>106</sup>

Such comfort is usually taken for granted until one loses it, and the Charlots gradually lost everything after the death of Henri. Charlot could later joke that he was a rich kid thrown out of the nest. Once a hippy at our home in Kâhala was talking about getting close to nature, and Charlot said, “I had the same feeling when I first took off my gloves.” In a note dated December 25, 1923—apparently a Christmas introspection—Charlot described the event sardonically:

Or moi qui étais un enfant “aristocrate” (encore que la mode en soit passée)—moi qui ait eu un guignol avec 20 personnages, un teddy-bear très gros, et un soldat de ma taille—je ne sais pas m’amuser sans jouets—comme font les enfants pauvres et les saints—et comme à mon âge et dans ma situation—on n’a plus de promeneuses ni de “nurse”—ma mauvaise humeur retombe sur moi-même et je me flagelle.—

(*Notebook C* : Notes Religieuses et Personnelles)

‘But I myself, who was an “aristocratic” child (even though the fashion was long gone)—I who had a puppet theatre with twenty figures, a very big teddy-bear, a soldier as big as me—I don’t know how to amuse myself without toys—as do poor children and saints—and as at my age and in my situation—one no longer has servants to take one on walks or a “nurse”—my bad humor falls back on myself and I flagellate myself.—’

Charlot would continue to make fun of his vanities from the past. He told me that when he first went to New York City, he treated himself to a shave. After a while, the barber said to him, “You’ve never had a shave before.” Charlot had been twisting his face around as the barber worked, when he should have kept still. Charlot was amused that he had felt chagrined by it: “When you go for a shave, you want people to think you’re important.” The change in Charlot’s circumstances did cause minor frictions that he occasionally voiced. At faculty housing in the early 1950s, my father and I were eating together at the table when he looked over at me and said, “Really, Johnny, I take a lot from all of you, but there *are* limits.” Startled, I asked what I had done. He said, “Don’t cut your vegetables with your knife.” He approved of a man who, rather than offend his hostess, died of eating a salad in which gasoline had been mistakenly used instead of olive oil.

My first wife, Dominique de Mahuet, described my father as having the manners of a *grand seigneur* without the financial means to support them. He saw himself as helping others with his patronage rather than as struggling to make his way among them. He would invariably put others’ interests before his own and try to see the other’s point of view in conflicts. When differences were irreconcilable, he would withdraw his friendship rather than continue the battle. Both Dominique and my mother felt that he could not afford to put himself and his work so impractically in second place. In view

of the troubles Charlot suffered throughout his life, a “survivor’s personality” would have been more practical, but the sense of noblesse oblige was an essential of Charlot’s character and, along with Christian morality, influenced the disinterestedness of his major and even minor decisions.

Charlot certainly used noblesse as a criterion for judging the actions of others. For instance, after I received acceptance letters from Harvard and Yale, I failed a course in trigonometry. Yale wrote to put me on probation until I passed the course in summer school, whereas Harvard made no mention of the failure. My father said that showed the difference between the two institutions. Harvard trusted its own decision, while Yale worried about little things and felt it had to uphold its dignity. Displaying one’s dignity was really pretentiousness. Charlot was aware of the old-world character of this attitude. When a Spanish duchess surprised the U.S. government by defending the interests of her peasants after a bombing accident, Charlot said that she was acting as a true noble. Paradoxically for Americans, noblesse forbade one’s considering any work beneath one. Charlot disliked intensely any refusal to do the required lowly work on a project, such as cleaning the brushes or sweeping the workshop floor. One committed oneself to doing the whole job.

Within that context of noblesse, however, Charlot jealously guarded his work, if not his career. Unlike Siqueiros, whose priorities changed during different periods of his life, Charlot’s were constant: creative artwork followed by writing and finally community activities. Dominique de Mahuet described him insightfully: “Sous ses airs doux, il fait ce qu’il veut” ‘Under his quiet air, he gets his way.’ She explained that he managed to arrange his life and the services of my mother to allow him time to do his artwork. Problems outside his work could upset its order, but he returned as soon as he could to his priorities. However, when he did spend time with us or some life problem, he was intensely present.

This aspect of Charlot’s background helps explain, I believe, the ambivalence of his response to potential patrons. Although he lived an unusually independent and individualistic life, Charlot would always yearn for the protection he lost at the death of his father. Wanting and needing care himself, he always ended up caring for others. In an interview of October 1, 1970, when I asked him why he had discontinued the once important theme of the duenna and child, he explained: “Well, I think I grew up a little bit, and I didn’t need the protection that I needed until rather late in life, I would say.” However, if a possible patron presented himself, Charlot would react strongly against any pressure to assume the role of a protégé, a reaction that hurt him in his career. Charlot’s relation with Claudel is the unique example of a relationship approaching that of patronage, and it took Claudel’s genius and tact to handle my father’s sensitivities; they treated each other as full human beings. Towards the end of his life, my father told my mother and Evelyn Giddings—his technical assistant on many projects and a friend who was constantly supportive in his illness—that all his life he had wanted a patron, and now he finally realized that he had had patrons all his life.

When Henri died, Charlot had to assume his role as male head of the family. He was unprepared and unsuccessful, and I believe his failure to fulfill his responsibilities haunted him. In any case, he had such a strong sense of the responsibilities of husband and father that it inhibited his own decision about

marriage. He told me—but never wrote my mother at the time—that he thought he would be unable to paint once he got married.

Charlot's experience with his sister, Odette, helped form, I believe, a particular aspect of his character and way of dealing with people: he would avoid confrontation and even conflict by maintaining a positive face and internalizing his anger and resentment.<sup>107</sup> My mother noted in her diary on June 28, 1941, an incident while feeding me when I was an infant: "I choke him giving him orange juice. When he can breathe again he smiles. Jean says that is like himself to smile when he thinks someone is going to hurt him." This practice enabled Charlot to maintain positive relations with those who wronged him; in fact, few such people knew how he felt. For instance, Carlos Mérida said that Charlot never made an issue of Rivera's destruction of his fresco *The Dance of the Ribbons* (Interview January 28, 1971); Mérida had no idea that Charlot had suffered from the deed. A smaller example is Merle Armitage, who insisted on being credited with the design of the portfolio *Picture Book* (1933) although it was entirely Charlot's work. Armitage portrayed Charlot's demeanor in words that must have reinforced my father's detestation of the author:

During the months when Charlot worked with us, making the plates for *Picture Book*, we were struck by his extreme modesty...he was painfully deferential, self-effacing, and serious. Only occasionally did he display an ingratiating, puckish humor.  
(Armitage 1944: 266)

Jean's relation with Odette is the first time this practice can be seen at work, and it was developed on the basis of a strong family love. That is, the motivation was strong and understandable in this case. What is remarkable is that he applied the same practice to others, which must be explained, I believe, by a temperamental aversion to confrontation. The advantage of such a stance is that one can maintain positive relations. The disadvantage is internal friction and a vulnerability to attack. My mother often felt that rather than withdrawing, my father should have stood up for himself and had it out with the people who were doing him wrong. Charlot's ultimate response to mistreatment was withdrawing his friendship, a decision informed by how much he himself brought to a relationship.<sup>108</sup> In the 1960s, when some people were objecting to his participation in a project, he told me, "Poor dears, they need me more than I need them."

## 5. THE INFLUENCE OF BACKGROUND

I have already mentioned a number of family influences, and more will be noted in the course of this biography. I will concentrate here on several general points.

Charlot's family background was unusually extensive and interesting—culturally, religiously, and philosophically rich—and he responded to it with all his extraordinary powers of love and understanding. The fact that he had a family connection to such diverse people meant that he was called to enter into their minds and ways of thinking. To do this, he had to become aware of cultural and philosophical differences and connect them with persons living individual lives. Moreover, because of that family connection, he was not doing this so much as a sympathetic, respectful outsider, but more as a

loving insider. Empathy became, therefore, a greater factor than sympathy. Authentically human relations were based on recognizing a common humanity expressed through different cultures; the human commonality and the cultural differences were equally to be cherished. Charlot's choice of themes expresses this view. For instance, women's care of children is universal, but the way of doing it varies by culture. Charlot's depictions of Mexican women with their children enable the viewer to appreciate both aspects and understand them better.

The appreciation of differences meant that, unlike many of his colleagues, Charlot was opposed to policies of assimilating Indians into Western culture or workers into bourgeois. He stated in an interview of October 13, 1970:

Well, we were, of course, thrown together, and for me the discovery was of course of people I would not have contacted otherwise. I mentioned already that peasant-coachman. I had the greatest respect for people who knew things I didn't know, and it was mostly those people, because the few people who had similar education to mine had no mystery for me. And well, perhaps later on, for example, when I was in Mexico and felt more, I wouldn't say at ease, but felt more the mystery and the interest of the Mexican Indian than my cultured and cultivated Mexican cousins; probably the same thing was at hand. I was interested in things that I had not experienced. I enriched my life with the experience of people who had started life in very different ways, and I think that the thing is the common man or the masses or whatever you want to call it, is really the type of man that interests me, that I feel closer to. There was a very curious misapprehension, I would say, when I went later on after ten years in Mexico to New York, to the United States, because there the Left was trying to put up a sort of art that would be a channel to what they called "the Masses," and I met some people, one of them was the head of the Communist Party at the time, and so on. But they spoke of "the Masses" that it was a sort of agglomeration or conglomerate of things that were not quite human. They never had that sense of the respect of the individual which had been so very strong with me, and though many of those Leftist guys received me terribly well because they thought I was one of them, I was very ill at ease with their idea that from outside they were going to reform those lowbrow people. I think their idea was to take those lowbrow people and eventually with the Revolution make of them highbrows. And of course that wasn't at all my idea. I liked them, I loved them, and I painted them as they were without any desire to modify them.

Charlot's opposition to assimilationist ideas was particularly important in Mexico, where attempts to ameliorate the condition of Indians were often patronizing and destructive of the native cultures (Warner 1997: 673). Charlot's commitment to improving the plight of Indians is clear from his theme of *cargadores* 'burden bearers,' which reveals their cruel exploitation. But no adequate solution could be acceptable for Charlot that did not respect and appreciate the indigenous culture. Similarly, in the early 1950s in Hawai'i,

he publicly encouraged Asian-Americans to maintain their cultural differences rather than lose them in the American melting pot.

Establishing a human relationship with someone of a different culture entailed learning about that culture, a learning informed by love. The recognition of humanity meant also that Charlot could never reduce a person simply to his social role, for example, that of a servant or a waiter. It also meant that Charlot himself was unwilling to play roles and adopt poses; he was also very uncomfortable about being categorized or labeled. He eschewed showmanship and could not subordinate himself into a patron-protégé relationship; indeed he would act counter to it. Thus his statement in his last days, when a number of his friends were treating his imminent death as a historical event, that he was not a monument, but a man.

Charlot learned his basic attitude toward human beings largely from his experience of his family. He then extended this ingrained cultural sensitivity and insight to peoples to whom he was not related. He once said, "To understand Hawaiians, you have to love Hawaiians." In his *Psychoplastie* of 1923, he writes: "La Sagesse est le type éternel de la charité des saints" 'Wisdom is the eternal archetype of the charity of saints.' This love was also the best motive for life and work, as he wrote of Siqueiros: "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" 'He engaged in politics, and examining in all sincerity of soul this sharp problem of rich and poor, took the side of the poor, through love' ("D. Alfaro Siqueiros," February 1924, TR). Charlot generalized this point in a slide lecture of June 9, 1965:

This is a Rembrandt. I think perhaps the difference between good and bad social art is the love of... the *aloha* for the people. I say *aloha* because I come from Hawai'i. Rembrandt saw that little girl who had been condemned to be beheaded, and she was to be exposed to the people on that sort of a cross, probably through the day and through the night, before she died, and he made that wash drawing of her. Now the subject in itself, of course, is brutal—the inhumanity of man to man, as Georges Rouault has said—but the content of the picture is love. And I think that is the difference between good social art and bad social art—is that it's not a declamation, it's not a conscious action, but simply an act of love.

Charlot's ability to understand cultures from within was based on his experience of his family.

Similarly, Charlot made an effort to empathize with people of different views. In an interview, he spoke very frankly about the strength of his negative reaction to an older generation of Mexican artists, the *Nacionalistas*:

there was a sort of elegance, what for me seemed like a false elegance: elongations and sophistication... That didn't leave me indifferent. It repulsed me horribly, so that I couldn't look at their things very much. So their intentions were good, that is, making use of Mexican folk motifs in fact, but the results were so refined, decorative,

and sophisticated that they couldn't appeal to me, that I couldn't hang on them.

(Interview May 18, 1971)

Nevertheless, Charlot made every effort to do them historical justice in his *Mexican Mural Renaissance* (MMR 61–66). Similarly, when I asked Charlot why Rivera had turned against his fellow muralists, he answered the question purely from Rivera's point of view: he thought Rivera was afraid the whole movement would be stopped and all the frescoes destroyed, and Rivera was trying to salvage what he could and be allowed to continue working. Even when I asked Charlot about an event that had hurt him extremely, Rivera's destruction of his *Dance of the Ribbons* in the Ministry of Education, Charlot again responded from Rivera's point of view: he really wanted to paint a tryptich and Charlot's own mural was in the way.

From a very early age, Charlot felt that understanding people of different cultures and views required study. Significantly, his first formal research is on the Aztecs, and he establishes a pattern he would use throughout his life. He starts with the art objects that were familiar to him from family collections, then reads native literature—for instance, the illustrations of the codices with translations and especially poetry—and finally moves to foreign and secondary literature. He took the native artistic and literary productions as the basis for criticizing foreign and secondary literature and for establishing his own views. For instance, he was struck by the differences between Aztec and Spanish accounts of the Conquest and later in Hawai'i by that between Hawaiian and foreign accounts of the “discovery” of the islands. That is, a pro-native perspective was built into his approach, and empathy was the main method employed. Moreover, because he sees Aztecs as persons, he will later attempt to place the particular aspects of their culture that he studies—artworks, dance, and so on—into a total life-context and world-view. He tries to see Aztecs and eventually present them as complete human beings living in their world. His capacity for empathy and the imaginative recreation of other worlds distinguishes his scholarship as well as his visual depictions and creative literature.

Charlot felt that his multiracial background helped him in understanding peoples of different races, even those not his own. For instance, he felt that being part Aztec helped him understand Aztecs. On the simplest level, Aztec parentage drew his attention to and quickened his interest in the culture. Having a wealth of Aztec artworks at his disposal helped him pursue his interest. More important, he looked at Aztecs as his relatives, his ancestors. Their gods were his family gods, as is clear when he discusses his work with Paul Claudel.

Claudel had just given for publication to the *Forum*, a monthly, a fragment in English from his work in course, *The Book of Christopher Columbus*, “The Gods Churn the Sea.” These were Mexican gods. Would I, an archeologist wise to the subject, illustrate the passage. I accepted, remarking however that the levity displayed, *à la Protée*, ill-fitted the beliefs of my ancestors, for I am proud of my quota of aztec blood; that the excess of x's and z's and tl's that mark the nahuatl language, here used for comic effect, on the lips of pagan priests and of their victims, at the drumming of

the low-lying teponaztle and the shrill notes of the clay flute, had once been plainchant fit for gods. (1975: 2)

Charlot could apply his strong family love to the Aztecs and their gods.

Charlot was interested in the fact that he usually got along very well with people of different races. He became very aware of this in World War I, when he was put in charge of a unit of Moroccan troops that had been very hard on their previous officers. When I asked him how he had managed, he smiled and said that he seemed to be able to get along with people of different races. In an interview with Beverly Creamer toward the end of his life (Charlot 1979 Creamer), he mentioned an interest in nonwhite peoples as one of the principal characteristics of his life. Charlot did not take it for granted that he or anyone else would get along with other peoples; a distance existed that arose both from culture and from previous history (like the previous officers of the Moroccan Division). If that distance was filled and he made personal contact with people, it was an achievement. He had made the effort of understanding—he did the study—he gave the affection.

On the other hand, Charlot recognized some limitations and regarded them as failings. He once said that the two peoples he could not understand were the English and the Japanese.<sup>109</sup> They made him feel awkward because they seemed to him inflexible in their particular etiquettes, which he did not master. He felt this social rigidity came from a sense of cultural inferiority: the English vis à vis the French, and the Japanese vis à vis the Chinese. He felt that people who were truly culturally confident could make contact more easily because they had *personal* confidence. Accordingly, Charlot felt very comfortable with Chinese people; there was in fact a long tradition in France that just as French culture was the highest in the West, Chinese culture was the highest in the East (cuisine forms an important argument for this view). Charlot did not experience the same problem with Germans, although he was certainly aware of the conventional French-German contrasts. He felt that his intense contact with German art during the Occupation gave him an appreciation and thus an understanding of German culture and people. The visual arts were Charlot's first entrée into another culture, an entrée that ensured his appreciation. He certainly did study and appreciate English and Japanese culture.

In accord with the above points, Charlot was remarkably free of racial prejudice. All peoples made beautiful things, therefore all people were fully human and worthy of admiration: "when you admire the art of a people, of course, you admire the racial characteristics that made that art possible" (Interview November 18, 1970). Anita Brenner recorded his position that "all artists think alike" (1970: 312). Charlot was also taken by the physical beauty of African-Americans as seen in his many exploratory drawings and paintings from New York City and Georgia. In Hawai'i, he called the mixed-race son of an African-American friend "The Man of the Future."

My mother told me after his death that she had never noticed a trace of racial prejudice in him. The statement was significant because she herself was somewhat prejudiced, so she was conscious of such feelings and would have recognized them in her husband. She gave as an example that when they were living in Athens, Georgia, in 1941–1944, Charlot simply ignored the racial rules, attended negro meetings, and so on. Those rules however made them both uncomfortable and were one of the reasons

they left Georgia. Athens was the center of the Ku Klux Klan at that time. On June 9, 1946, my mother wrote to her friend Prudence Plowe about Merle Armitage's request that Charlot illustrate a book by Ronald Firbank:

Jean got an immensely voluminous letter from Armitage asking if he would illustrate a "Prancing Nigger" with rolling eyes and highstepping and brightly dressed. Jean answered that if Armitage had seen his book on Georgia murals he would know that the least thing in the world he wanted to do was paint a funny negro.<sup>110</sup>

Significantly, Charlot's attitude was not that of a Northern liberal, whose tendency was to ignore racial differences. Charlot was characteristically interested in African-Americans as a culture and also in southern whites. One reason given for rejecting his 1942 mural project on *The Negro in U. S. History* was that his negroes were "too black." Similarly, when he was planning his 1942 WPA mural *Cotton Gin* for McDonough, Georgia—black workers laboring to send the next generation to college—he found that the Washington authorities were more worried about the subject than southern whites. Charlot was later delighted to learn that older black workers were taking their children to see the mural because it depicted their way of working before the gins were modernized. Perhaps Charlot's definitive comment on the experience in Georgia was naming his son born there after Martin de Porres, a black Peruvian saint. Charlot wrote Father Edmund L. Binsfeld on April 4, 1945: "Our family has grow[n] to three children—Ann 5, John 4—Martin 1—named after Martin of Porres, for the sake of Latin America and inter racial relations!"<sup>111</sup>

As a child in France, the first racial prejudice Charlot was likely to meet was the anti-Semitism that pervaded the society and was found even in his extended family and his church (e.g., Sutton 1982: 8, 39 f., 248, 261). Joris-Karl Huysmans, a Catholic writer whom Charlot greatly admired, could have his characters argue that many of the church's problems are caused by Jews, atheists, and masons (e.g., *L'Oblat* 1917: 277, 279, 281). Charlot had all three among his closest relatives. Maurice Denis, the Catholic artist and writer whom Charlot admired, and Vincent d'Indy, who directed the music program of the Gilde Notre-Dame, the liturgical art group to which Charlot belonged, were both on the board of a journal that was chauvinistic and anti-Semitic. Anti-Semitism is impossible to escape in France even today, where it peppers many ordinary conversations. Charlot could not have avoided it, and his decision not to participate in it must have been conscious. Besides love of and pride in family, Charlot's main pro-Semitic grounding seems to have been his feeling of closeness with the religion of Israel: its patriarchs were as important to him as Christian saints. On the other hand, the difference between the two religions was significant for him. The reason he hesitated to marry Anita Brenner, with whom he was very much in love in Mexico, was that she would not convert to Catholicism; she was in fact a committed Jew even if more for cultural than religious reasons.<sup>112</sup> Charlot wanted a Catholic family, and he could not follow his grandfather's example precisely because he himself was not indifferent to religion as Louis Goupil was.

Charlot was strongly opposed to racial stereotypes, especially in the visual arts. When I was in boarding school, I asked him to send me some reproductions of Toulouse-Lautrec for my walls. He sent me a set, but later told me that he had considered not sending one of a businessman with a dancing-girl

drinking at a table because he felt the man was an anti-Semitic stereotype; he finally concluded that I was strong enough not to be affected by it (I hadn't noticed). Similarly, he was uncomfortable with the stereotypes used by Orozco and Rivera and wrote strongly against the negative stereotypes of Mexican Indians. Charlot was against nonracial stereotypes as well, such as that imposed on young artists in his lecture "Nous les Jeunes !" The one group that he himself satirized with hostile stereotypes was the rich.

Charlot's aversion to stereotypes had surprising depth. I once asked him why he hadn't been attracted to a woman he knew in the 1930s in New York City; she was beautiful, a wonderful artist, and rich, and she told me she had been chasing him. He answered, "It would have been too much of a cliché." When I asked him to explain, he said, "Well, the French artist who comes to America and marries a millionairess—it would have been like wearing a beret." Similarly, he was disconcerted when, arriving at a mid-Western city to give a lecture, he was met by the businessman husband of a member of the culture committee, who told him he had been given strict orders to always call him Señor Carlo. Charlot quickly put him at his ease; that is, he established a human relationship with him.

Many of Charlot's friends commented on his lack of pose, his refusal to play roles. *Interview with Frank Sheed.*

Carlos Mérida:

nunca hizo alarde de su capacidad, de su esto, de su lo otro. Él mantuvo y como ha mantenido hasta ahorita un tipo de vida que es muy ajeno a la pomposidad, muy ajeno al autobombo, muy ajeno a las condiciones ostentarias de que son muy afectos los pintores de ahora. (Interview January 29, 1971)

'he never showed off his capacity, his this or that. He maintained—as he has up to now—a type of life that is very alien to pomposity, to self-praise, very alien to the ostentatious conditions that today's painters are so affected to.'

Pablo O'Higgins:

Well, yes, he is [religious], but in a very honest way. You know what I mean? That's what I admire in Jean. He is what he is. You see what I mean? There are some people who pretend to be what they're not, you know. But Jean is a sincere person from the top to the bottom. That's what I always admired in Jean, and we were great friends, you know. (Interview March 21, 1974)

Charlot refused also to treat others according to their roles, whether high or low. Dominique de Mahuet was puzzled that Charlot was awkward with servants even though he had been reared in a household that employed several. He once complained, and I observed many times, that he was made uncomfortable by servants because he could not stop thinking of them as complete human beings. On a trip on an ocean liner in the early 1950s, he was discomfited when a purser kept telling him how much he disliked his work. My mother once joked that my father had not married a certain rich woman because he did not want to have to deal with her butler. More seriously, in his last illness, he resisted hiring a nurse, I

believe, because he felt too weak to deal with a nonfamily member; the unfortunate result was that the burden fell on my mother.

Charlot was similarly concerned about his relations with his helpers and assistants, admiring and honoring them as colleagues and friends and establishing long-term friendships with them. When working on a fresco, he created a sense of collegial teamwork. The disadvantages of doing this were, first, that assistants would occasionally take—and be allowed—too much freedom to personalize their section and, second, that Charlot would not insulate himself from any personal problems among the team members.

In fact, Charlot reacted strongly against being categorized himself in any way. In my interview with him of November 18, 1970, he reacted strongly when I said, “You have pretty left-wing ideas about social problems”:

Well, I completely object with your idea of my ideas. I think that I'm rather right-wing than left-wing, but anyhow... Well, I have two sets of ideas. One of them is social. The other one I inherited from people like Léon Bloy, I suppose, who didn't like rich people, and I suppose I don't specially like rich people. At least they have to prove themselves before I like them, and I have not the same difficulty with the poor people. I sort of like them direct.

Charlot's prejudice against the rich reveals itself at moments throughout his life. For instance, on meeting the head of the Carnegie Institution, he wrote in his diary for March 1, 1928:

arrivée président Merriam. bonne impression. sa femme : grand collier de perles  
mais gentille.  
'Arrival of president Merriam. Good impression. His wife: big necklace of pearls,  
but nice.'

The combination of a theological and even ecclesiastical conservatism along with politically radical concern for the poor was not unusual; examples include Cardinal Manning and Hilaire Belloc in England, and this combination eventuated in Pope Leo XIII's approach to social problems, the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, of which Charlot owned a copy. In fact, Charlot voted consistently liberal and argued always for leftist positions. For instance, when I complained that plumbers and carpenters made more than teachers, he said that was good because there were more of them. But he clearly disliked being labeled and could perhaps think of his bourgeois upbringing as rightist, although he had left that upbringing far behind.

Occasional texts in Charlot's writing do or could be construed as expressing negative racial ideas. The poem *rythme de la Satyre Ménippée*, probably of 1915, uses a hideous negress to represent truth as contrasted to a white illusion. The young Charlot obviously knew the conventional rhetoric. A more problematical text for me is Charlot's line in *Psychoplastie*, his 1923 poem for Rivera's mural *Creation*. Among the “forces choses qui incitent au rire ici-bas” ‘the things that incite to laughter here below,’ he lists “le nègre à l'enterrement” ‘the negro at the funeral.’ The problem is not the word *nègre*; it

was not necessarily pejorative at the time (though it is impossible to use today), and was used in the expression *art nègre*, e.g., “les arts des peuples dits primitifs : nègres d’Afrique et Tarascos du Mexique” ‘the arts of so-called primitive peoples: negroes of Africa and Tarascans of Mexico.’<sup>113</sup> The word was also used non-pejoratively by writers whom Charlot read like August Génin. The problem is the joke: the incongruence of black skin at a funeral. Charlot did not feel the line was racially prejudiced; otherwise he would not have written it.<sup>114</sup>

Charlot was in fact so confident about his lack of prejudice that he could be deliberately provocative by skating on the edge. For instance, in the original typescript of “Saints and santos: excerpts from a book in preparation, *Mexican Mural Renaissance*” (1955), he used the old color term *nigger-black* for Christ’s body:

...man claims redress to God.

God answers him under so many disguises as to emulate single-handed the crowds of Indian cosmogonies. At times, He is the blond child of Atocha, in a Fauntleroy suit, velvet hat with white plume, a beribboned shepherd’s crook for a want. Or an Ecce Homo, roped as cattle, flagellated, crowned with thorns, hair matted with sweat and beard with blood. Or the señor of the Poison, His skin nigger-black, His loins clothed in purple velvet spangled with gold. Or a Lamb. Or a Kerchief.

The n-word is established in the nomenclature of plants, insects, and animals. As a color term, it refers to the darker shades of the colors to which it is attached; it is still used thus by English writers, such as Colin Dexter (1979: 15): “she drew up the zip at the side of her nigger-brown skirt.” Nonetheless, the editor of *Liturgical Arts*, Maurice Lavanoux, wrote Charlot: “On page 8 you mention ‘...His skin nigger-black...[?]’ I fear this would create a slight rumpus here. How about saying ‘coal-black?’”<sup>115</sup> Charlot answered: “Instead of coal-black, why not minstrel-black. That would keep the idea.” The editor published (80): “His skin coal black...” Later, Charlot told me indignantly: “Imagine not letting the word be used for Christ!” Charlot apparently felt he could radically revalorize the term, sacralizing it by applying it to Christ’s body. The reference to African racial background, “the idea,” was intended and deliberate, a contrast to the blond Jesus. Perhaps even the pejorative character of the word was part of Charlot’s general expression: he was influenced by Second-Isaiah’s description of the Suffering Servant, a prefigurement of Christ, as despised and tormented to disfigurement for our sins (Isaiah 53). Charlot himself was very proud of the *Black Christ and Worshipers* he painted in fresco over the main altar of the mission church at Naiserelagi, Fiji, in 1962. Charlot’s use of the word was, therefore, an aggressive attempt to redefine a central expression of race prejudice. Lavanoux felt the word was irredeemable.

Similarly, Charlot enjoyed skating close to the edge of cultural sensitivities. He once said, “I’ll know I’ve been accepted by Hawaiians when they think it’s all right for me to put Pele on the stage.” Pele, the volcano goddess, was a particularly strong topic for Hawaiians, both because of her still living power—it was felt that she could do damage if offended—and because Charlot was a non-Hawaiian. Even more clearly, when he learned that the worst Fijian insult was to eat someone’s Adam’s apple, he said that teasingly to one of his Fijian friends; the friend understood perfectly what he was about.

My father's attitude—along with the experience of living in Mexico and multicultural Hawai'i—were the three positive influences my siblings and I enjoyed growing up in a world of racial prejudice. Charlot once said he was happy to raise his children in Hawai'i, where there are “lots of races and American toilets” (Martin Charlot, personal communication, May 14, 1999). Once on seeing some older, corpulent Caucasian tourists sunning themselves at Waikīkī, Charlot said, “It's hard to believe we're the master race.” I was in fact unaware of racial prejudice until I was around nine or ten years old. I was reading *Time* and was puzzled by the “Race” section because the article did not describe a speed contest. I asked my father about it, and he explained very delicately that some persons thought that people of some other races were inferior. I asked him why. He said, “There is no reason.” If any of us said anything that seemed prejudiced, we were told not to say it and we could see that it displeased both our parents. The best education was naturally our home atmosphere in which people of other cultures and races were loved and admired. This family influence was so strong that we resisted strongly any negative external influences.

As I have emphasized, Charlot's multiracial, multicultural family background was essential to his self-image. He felt he could see his Aztec lineage in his grandfather's jaw. As a result, Charlot could never think of himself as just a Frenchman or just a Mexican; he could never possess the racial and cultural unity that was the norm at the time. For Charlot, this multifaceted background did not divide his personality but added to it; it was an enrichment of his identity. His pride in his background was communicated to his children; we would brag about all the races we were. In fact, it was common practice in the Hawai'i of our youth—in which race mixture was common and an interesting topic of conversation—to ask about people's “nationalities.”

A further consequence of this background was that Charlot never belonged completely to one culture or one place. In France, he was unusual because of his family's strong Mexican connection, but when he went elsewhere, he was considered French. In my opinion, the result was that he was a perpetual outsider. Charlot himself had a very different view, at least in Mexico: he felt he could choose to identify himself more or less completely with one aspect of his family background (Brenner 1926). Mexico was something of an exception because of Charlot's family connection. But even there his status as a Mexican was controversial, and he appears in the memoirs of the muralists as an unusual figure: he seemed to be an outsider but considered himself an insider. For instance, in 1924, when the *Sindicato de Pintores y Escultores Revolucionarios* passed a resolution prohibiting membership to foreign artists, Charlot wrote demanding that the terms be modified to take his case into account, and they were (“Carta al Sindicato de Pintores y Escultores Revolucionarios” 1924). On the other hand, in the same year, he compromised his position to help his friends by signing an open letter by foreigners in support of the muralists (*MMR* 285 f.). In his Mexican period, Charlot is best understood as an insider-outsider. His status would be less ambiguous in the United States and the Pacific.

A complicating factor everywhere but France was Charlot's unusually extensive knowledge of the native culture, the result of the effort he made to understand the people of the place. He became the outsider who knew more about the local culture than most insiders. In Mexico, he was the only artist and one of the very few writers who learned Náhuatl. In Hawai'i, he learned Hawaiian at a time when the

great majority of Hawaiians did not. This made him an unusual figure on the scene, and reactions were mixed. On the one hand, the appreciation of a highly civilized Frenchman for the local culture could help validate it and encourage its members. On the other hand, people can become uneasy when an outsider begins to enter their domain. For instance, Hawaiians generally feel that they are misunderstood by other races, so Charlot's insight required some explanation. His friend, the artist Tom Keali'inohomoku, once seriously enquired of me whether we had some Hawaiian blood in our family; he could not otherwise understand Charlot's perceptions. Similarly, the modern religious teacher Morrnah Simeona told me she had found in meditation that Charlot had been a Hawaiian in a previous life. On the other hand, some Hawaiians deeply resented what they regarded as an intrusion into their own culture and disagreed with his expression of it.

With his accent and manners, Charlot appeared completely French, and he never doubted the centrality of that heritage. Despite enrichment from other cultures, he was reared French, received a French education, and was infused with French cultural pride. All Charlot's manners and sense of propriety had their source in his Parisian upbringing. In an interview of October 22, 1970, he recalled:

I remember it came to me as a great surprise, though, that there were other histories than the *Histoire de France*. I had been very innocently working on my *Histoire de France*, and I looked at the whole world through those sort of rosy glasses of the *Histoire de France*. And I think I was once—one of my of summers in England—also I was maybe thirteen, fourteen years old, maybe less—I suddenly found an *Histoire* which wasn't of France, but of England, and I was surprised how biased it was for the English, even against the French. I was very incensed, and I realized that there were many *histoires*: *histoire* of Germany, of France, of England and so on and so forth, and I stopped being the innocent I had been. Maybe the only place where I remain up to now a *chauviniste* about France is really in the arts...I *still* will fight for French painting as being the hub of the world, but of course I can't prove it. But I remember that before that I always thought of France as being the hub of the world. I had to change a little bit in certain things, but I do not about art. I still think that France is the hub of the world as art is concerned.

As a Frenchman, Charlot enjoyed a great cultural confidence based on the recognized contributions of France in every field. In the visual arts, Charlot placed himself in the line of the great Classicists Poussin, David, Ingres, and Cézanne, a line he saw being perpetuated in Cubism. But Charlot was not a French exclusivist. His image of French art as a hub shows that the center was radiating or the wheel of culture rolling over new land; it was also a firm foundation: "Poussin and Cézanne both exemplified the French flair for clarity that, later on, as he came under the spell of nonclassical cultures, helped him retain his balance" (Blurb for Morse print catalog). Charlot's French culture provided a base from which he could confidently and respectfully explore other cultures as the *Américanistes* had been doing. As he did this, Charlot never assumed an attitude of cultural superiority; Carlos Mérida emphasized that point in an interview with me of January 28, 1971. Charlot could use his Frenchness to help validate and encourage the Mexican cultural movements—he could share the technical, historical, literary, and philosophical

knowledge he had acquired in France—only because he was not using his Frenchness for selfish purposes. In fact, his Frenchness both helped and harmed him in Mexico. Mexico was strongly Francophile, and Charlot's earliest important contact, Ramos Martínez, the artist and director of the Escuela de Pintura al Aire Libre, was an extreme example of that attitude. Artists of Charlot's own generation like Fernando Leal and Nacho Asúnsolo were also strongly attracted to French culture, and Diego Rivera was initially drawn to Charlot because they could speak French together. On the other hand, José Vasconcelos at first refused to employ Charlot in the mural movement because he wanted a purely Mexican effort that would overcome the complex of cultural inferiority Mexicans felt especially towards France.<sup>116</sup> In the end, Charlot's foreignness, if not his Frenchness, was used as an argument to deny him employment in Mexico and later to minimize his role in Mexican art history.

Charlot is in fact extraordinarily difficult to study and to understand precisely because he had a multicultural, multidisciplinary, and international career. That career was formed in large part by his family background and his response to it. He himself felt this so strongly that at the end of his life, in a shaky hand on a slip of paper, he wrote down guidelines for any student of his work:

Born and raised in Paris, having worked in Mexico both as an archeologist and a fresco muralist and now living in Hawaii, I have always looks [*sic*: looked] for the deep roots of the present day countries I lived in. I studied the native languages, *nahuatl* in Mexico, *hawaiian* in Hawaii, and [have] written and published in both languages.

Strongest influence in my paintings is the blood legacy of a great grandmother whose ~~in~~ aztec ascendancy gave me a taste for so called primitive art that blends uniquely with the studies of classical art I did both at the Beaux Arts School and at the Louvre as befits a Paris born artist.

<sup>1</sup> Between the first and last paragraphs, the blurb is clearly in Charlot's style. Such statements are common in his writings, e.g., 1974 Artists: 45: "I myself have Mexican blood, the correct mixture of Spanish and Indian. My great grandmother was of undiluted Aztec stock. At times I felt a terrible pull toward things that were not what a good Frenchman would naturally enjoy. I leaned toward forms of art labeled by some as primitive or savage"; after describing human sacrifice, he states, "I just give this as an illustration of the fact that, Frenchman though I am, I am also a Mexican Indian." Unpublished, undated interview with Jean Charlot and Zohmah Charlot, unnumbered typescript, probably early 1950s: 6 f., asked if his Aztec ancestry "has an influence":

Yes, I think it does, the fact that I am part Aztec; not very much, it goes to great grand mother in my case. It is very important, and I feel it is of course with the tradition of Aztec art. I think I could relate to my studies of Mayan art in Yucatan and of course in my relation with the Mexican Indian, which has been very close to my life in Mexico. And I don't think that I could have done that if I hadn't felt that in some way I was one of them.

It was Charlot's great-great-grandmother who was pure Aztec. Similarly, Charlot wrote to Don Eddy n.d., 1970s:

Now that I can look at my life work pretty much *in toto* I am astonished by the fact that 99% of my subject-matter concerns ~~colored~~ dark races, indians, negroes, polynesians, melanesians, and that without intending it! My own roots are complicated: French, Russian, sephardi, aztec, and though the latter is ~~removed~~ minimal (a great grandmother) it obviously has been the active ingredient in the mixture. As you know Gauguin was in a similar fix, with a great grandmother who was a Peruvian Indian. He was not faking when he left Paris and no more did I.

Charlot attributed Gauguin's feelings for Tahiti to his Inca blood; he said that historians took too lightly Gauguin's statements about its importance for him. Charlot returned often to the comparison with Gauguin (e.g., "Charlot," ca. 1971):

[His Peruvian blood] made him unhappy until he had found something closer to what I'd call the original conditions, his great-grandmother, and I'm in the same fix... I was born and reared in Paris, you can say for all my life has been a search for what I've called, as you see, the original conditions.

Close to death, Charlot wrote on a slip of paper in a shakey hand:

Born and raised in Paris, having worked in Mexico both as an archeologist and a

<sup>2</sup> One becomes aware of that gesture in Hawai'i because it is considered a curse in the classical culture. That culture had a strong belief in family traits, *māna*, and tracing one's characteristics to one's varied racial background is common local practice.

- <sup>3</sup> In the *Extrait de registre de l'état civil de la Commune de La Tronche*, collected by Odette Charlot and now in the JCC, the death on March 24, 1875, is recorded of Pierre Charlot, the father of Henriette, *rentier* 'of independent means' or 'retired,' at seventy-six years of age. He is described as a native of Cussy les Forges and husband of Louise Verdun, who was probably deceased because no information was available on her. The witnesses to the death were his neighbors, a *limonadier* 'victualler' and a *garde-champêtre* 'country policeman,' indicating his social circle. Odette wrote on this document that Pierre would have been born in 1799.
- <sup>4</sup> Arlette wrote to Zohmah Charlot on August 11, 1989, that Henriette Charlot had been pregnant when she traveled to Russia and that Henri was legitimate. This is however contradicted by the *Livret de Famille*. Odette was not always truthful with Arlette about her family background; she told me that she had not told Arlette about her Jewish family because her husband, Maurice, who was violently anti-Semitic, "would put her out of the house." Maurice's first wife was Jewish and ran away with an American GI. Arlette did, however, know later that the family had Jewish forebears and wrote information about them to Zohmah.
- <sup>5</sup> The available evidence is confused and inconsistent, and two Russian scholars, to whom I am grateful, have told me that they could not credit the family tradition. When Charlot was young, Henri showed him a photograph of his grandfather. He showed the same photograph—with the words "That is your grandfather"—to Odette, who showed it to me in Paris in the 1960s (the photograph is now in the Jean Charlot Collection). Neither my aunt nor my father made any attempt to identify the person in the photograph, but Patricia Ann Polansky, the Russian Bibliographer at the Hamilton Library, University of Hawai'i, easily identified the subject as the Tzar Alexander III (March 10, 1845–November 1, 1894). The objections to the idea that Alexander was the father of Henri are weighty: Alexander would have been only fourteen years old at the time Henri was conceived, and he was known throughout his life for the "the absolute purity of his domestic life" (Lowe 1972: 22). Without giving her source, Zohmah Charlot noted in a letter to one of her granddaughters: "Your great grandfather Henri Charlot was born in St. Petersburg 1860, his mother was a Frenchwoman named Charlot. That was the year a French wet nurse was in the palace as Czar Nicolas had a mistress who was giving birth to his child." However, Alexander II was the Tsar in 1860, not Nicholas I. Henri's father was certainly rich, but his identity and connection to the court cannot be established.
- <sup>6</sup> Odette argued that the disease was *variole* "pox, syphilis," often called *vérole*, but the *Extrait des registres mortuaires* is explicit.
- <sup>7</sup> A photograph is in the JCC. The inscription reads: "Henriette Charlot décédée le 13 Juillet 1871" 'Henriette Charlot deceased July 13, 1871.'

<sup>8</sup> On his death bed, Henri attempted to write a friend named Gref in St. Petersburg to thank him for a fur jacket. He regrets that he cannot travel to Russia because of the war. Interview October 18, 1970: “We had lived, of course, with the money that my father made at his business. His business was really imports, and he depended on a German firm for his imports from China. That was his big business. So with the war and the Franco-German War, that was the end of his business, and he really withered and died as a result.” In-laws owned Briançon & Cie, “Furniture Générale pour Fleurs et Plumes, Pongée Shantung, Mouchoirs de Soie, Laques et Eventails...” (document in JCC). Charlot had a family feeling for Russian culture; he writes on a 1967 Christmas card to the Menêts, thanking them for a photograph of himself in a large coat and fur cap: “Et pour la photo où je me trouve tout à fait russe” ‘and for the photograph, in which I find I look completely Russian.’

<sup>9</sup> Génin 1933: 389, seems to place the arrival of the Goupils in Mexico around the mid-1840s. Names and some dates are based on twentieth-century research into the family by Odette Charlot and others (documents in the JCC). Also available is the baptismal certificate of Louis, which provides names. Charlot confused P. N. Goupil with J. V. Goupil in 1925 (draft letter to W. A. Bryan, September). On September 2, 1956, Charlot wrote Odette:

Comme tu le dis, chère sœur, je n’ai jamais bien compris à la famille. Peut-être que tu pourrais m’envoyer un arbre généalogique à ce sujet. Je sais qu’il est important pour les enfants de voir mon côté de la famille aussi, en plus de leurs parents américains.

‘As you say, dear sister, I have never really understood the family. Perhaps you could send me a family tree on this subject. I know it’s important for the children to see my side of the family as well as their American relatives.’

<sup>10</sup> Some family notes give the date as May 3.

<sup>11</sup> His death certificate, *Extrait d’Acte de Décès*, is in the JCC. Odette notes: “baptisé à Blainville-Crevon près de Buchy le 5 mai 1806, Seine Maritime.”

<sup>12</sup> I thank Madame Florence de Chamborant, the current and most conscientious proprietor of the Pavillon, for receiving me. My information on the building and grounds was kindly provided by Mr. Henri Cholet, in his 2003 publication and through personal communication. The architects working on the Château Neuf were Jean de Fourcy, Jacques I<sup>er</sup> Androuet du Cerceau, and Louis Métezeau. The Pavillon originally housed the official in charge of the palace parks and gardens and was thus named the Pavillon du Jardinier (the Pavillion of the Gardener). In 1878, the family property at Le Pecq was transferred as part inheritance and part sale to Victor’s daughter Claire and her husband (and Victor’s business associate) Alexandre-Jules Bisson. Claire Goupil Bisson died in 1890, and the property was sold in 1891.

<sup>13</sup> Information collected by Odette, now in the JCC. She typed notices from the *Revue Horticole* of 1871, 1872, and 1873, and mounted an illustrated newspaper article by E. B., “L’Aloès du Pecq.” A second, undated print, commissioned by the family, shows a large *maguey* plant at the entrance of the Pavillon. The JCC holds two stereoscopic views of the plants.

- <sup>14</sup> A Goupiliensi was planted in the garden and reached a height of 7.80 meters in 1872 (Florence de Chamborant, Pavillon de Sully, personal communication, July 3, 2003).
- <sup>15</sup> The marriage date given in some twentieth-century family documents, October 13, 1836, is due to a confusion with the registration at the French legation on January 28, 1836 (note of Odette Charlot). The baptismal certificate of Louis states explicitly that he is legitimate. The parents of Anna Benita are listed as Don Pedro Meléndez and Doña Maria Martinez. Odette wrote Zohmah on June 27, 1947: “It is not Bon Papa’s mother who was pure aztec, she was Mexican = Melindez [*sic*], half and half, her mother was pure aztec = Bon Papa’s great mother. Ann etc. → Jean → our mother → Bon Papa → Mexican mother → Aztec mother.” This accords with Eugène Goupil’s statement that his mother was a “descendante des Aztèques, en ligne directe, du côté maternel” (cited in John Charlot 1990-1991: 68); my mistranslation, “on my mother’s side,” a result of careless rewriting, is a howler. Charlot mistakenly wrote (1974 Artists: 45): “My great grandmother was of undiluted Aztec stock.” Odette notes that Anna was baptized at the cathedral of Mexico City on July 30, 1811.
- <sup>16</sup> Fane 1996: 71, 74. Zantwijk 1960: 17.
- <sup>17</sup> Their sixth child, Gustave Goupil (1842–1884), married Désirée Coulon, and their daughter married into the Gaillard family. [The birth date may be 1841. Guillermo Tovar emailed me on February 1, 2008, that he had found an act of baptism for Gustavo Victor Goupil dated December 19, 1841.] Their other daughter, Lucie Goupil (1879–1966), whom I met in 1955, married into the Robin family; their daughter Suzanne married André Fromy, who invited us into their country home. Zohmah Charlot wrote to Odette on April 24, 1966: “I told Jean about her [Lucie Robin’s] death and he remembers her very well.” The eleventh child of Joseph and Maria, Louise Goupil (died 1882) married into the du Peuty family, providing the family’s only link with the aristocracy (the family had a title of count); their charming son Paul (born 1878), a heroic aviator, was killed in the war on March 30, 1918, which left a great impression on all.
- <sup>18</sup> Harmel 1988. Duroselle 1972: 193 f. Charlot kept up with the Harmels, using his connection in the 1930s to help Alma Savage when she was doing research on Léon’s work. We met Léon Harmel *fils* in 1955, and he had still a wondrous sprightly energy. Arlette, letter to John Charlot, April 25, 1991: “Avant la guerre de 39–45 Jean avait dirigé vers nous une journaliste qui faisait parti du groupe de son éditeur a N.Y. pour visiter les œuvres sociales et l’usine lainière des Harmel. Miss Savage. Je l’ai emmené vers la famille Harmel au Val des bois près Reims” ‘Before the war of 1939–1945, John sent to us a lady journalist who was part of the group of his editor at N.Y. to visit the social works and cloth factory of the Harmels. Miss Savage. I took her to see the Harmel family at Val des Bois, near Reims.’

<sup>19</sup> Interview October 5, 1970. Charlot discussed with me the virtues and problems of this early social consciousness: the patron desired sincerely to help the workers, but risked disempowering them further by blunting their militancy. Similarly, Charlot explained to me that some activists criticized Lorraine Hansberry's 1959 *A Raisin in the Sun* because the protagonist worked free for the white nuns.

Pierre, the grandson of Mathilde and Jules Briançon, and his daughters treated us with great kindness during our visits to France.

<sup>20</sup> Jane M. Walsh provided the following information:

The unusual name Espiridion is after St. Spyridion, a 4th century Bishop of Tremithus, who was born in Cyprus. Goupil's Mexican mother was following a custom of her country by honoring the saint on whose feast day her child was born – Dec. 14th being Goupil's birthday and Spyridion's feast day. [The Ciriaco might be another saint?] (Email June 9, 2017)

<sup>21</sup> Cohen 1998: 27, 29. The Briançon in-laws owned a factory for artificial flowers. Both products were used extensively in the fashions of the time. Génin mentions a Goupil as one of two "fondateurs des magasins de nouveautés *La Primavera* et *La Sorpresa*" "founders of the department stores *La Primavera* and *La Sorpresa*," but the date and thus the generation is not specified, 1908–1910: 2; 156 f.

<sup>22</sup> On the business of the Goupils in Mexico, see Génin 1933: 349, 389; 400 f. E. Goupil is characteristically successful raising funds from within the French community in Mexico for needy workers in France.

<sup>23</sup> I thank Maxime Briançon for these dates.

<sup>24</sup> On the following see Boban 1891 volume 1: E.-Eugène Goupil: "Introduction" VII f.; Génin: "Lettre-Préface," pp. XI–XV; Boban: "Avant-Propos," pp. 7–19; "Notes Biographiques sur M. Aubin," pp. 23–30; "Biographie de Chevalier Lorenzo Boturini Benaduci (d'après M. A. Chavero)," pp. 33–51; Boban 1891 volume 2; Aubin 1893; Boban 1899; Réville 1899; *Catalogue des Manuscrits Mexicains de la Bibliothèque Nationale* 1899: 1 f.; Galarza 1974: 9 f.; Luis Martinez H. 1994; Medina González 1998: 17–24. Cohen 1998 is most important for its use of family documents.

<sup>25</sup> Gibson 1964: 607. Galarza 1974: 9, states that the collection is second to that of the Museum of Anthropology and History in Mexico City. H. O. in *Catalogue des Manuscrits Mexicains de la Bibliothèque Nationale* 1899: 2, writes:

le fonds mexicain de Paris l'emporte sur toutes les collections des deux mondes par l'antiquité et l'importance des documents qu'il contient pour l'histoire de l'ancien Mexique, et l'ensemble de ces collections réunies est encore inférieur en nombres aux 420 articles du fonds mexicain de la Bibliothèque Nationale.

'the Mexican archive of Paris is superior to all the collections of the two worlds in the antiquity and importance of the documents it contains for the history of ancient Mexico, and the ensemble of all these collections put together is still inferior in number to the 420 articles of the Mexican archive of the Bibliothèque Nationale.'

<sup>26</sup> Génin 1908–1910: 4; 1933: XI, 293 f., 331 f., 396. A. H. de León-Portilla 1988: 128, 138.

<sup>27</sup> I thank Jane M. Walsh for these dates. I am indebted to her for much of the information in this section.

<sup>28</sup> Boban claimed to have lived for twenty-five years in Mexico, but Jane M Walsh has established the years given above:

He left Mexico the second time for New York City, where he spent about a year and a half, returning to Paris in January 1888. He tended to exaggerate a bit about how long he lived in Mexico, sometime saying two decades, quarter century, etc. (Email June 9, 2017)

<sup>29</sup> Génin 1933: 434; also 407. Jane M. Walsh emailed me on June 9, 2017:

The cardboard box factory may have been started by Boban's father, since he was a *gainier* and made leather chests in Paris before going to Mexico. Although René Victor Boban returned to Paris sometime before 1862, the factory was still advertised as such (*fabrica de cartón*) in the French business directory of 1866.

<sup>30</sup> In the Imperial almanac of 1865, Boban is listed as "Eugène Boban.—Callejon del Espiritu Santo N° 7. —Magasin de curiosités et d'antiquités, antiquaire de Sa Majesté l'Empereur [*sic*]" 'Eugène Boban.—[address]—Store of curiosities and antiquities, antique dealer of His Majesty the Emperor' (Génin 1933: 346). A. H. de León-Portilla: 1988: 140 ff. Génin 1908–1910: 5; 1912: 316, "mon ami, l'estimable archéologue M. Eugène Boban" 'my friend, the estimable archeologist M. Eugène Boban.' Walsh 2008: 38 f. As seen below, Louis Goupil was an archeological consultant of Maximilian.

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- <sup>31</sup> Boban in Aubin 1893: I; II, for the following quotation. A copy of this book was in the Charlot family library and was inherited by David Charlot from Odette through Arlette.
- <sup>32</sup> After Odette's death, Charlot agreed with my suggestion that the artifacts surviving in her collection be given to the same museum (letter to Arlette, June 13, 1977). Braun 1993: 90, Gauguin may have seen Goupil's collection at the Exposition. Jane M. Walsh provided information for this section.
- <sup>33</sup> Charlot 1963: 179. John Charlot 1990–1991: 66 ff.
- <sup>34</sup> Document in JCC. Odette Charlot has written on it "succession père de Bon Papa."
- <sup>35</sup> Arlette Menêt, personal communication, June 3, 1995. A nineteenth-century receipt from the store gives J. V. Goupil as the proprietor, the address as 1<sup>a</sup> Calle de Plateros, and lists much of the merchandise. In the JCC, a ring from the store is preserved in its original case; inside the cover of the case is printed in gold letters: "Al Arco-Iris, Goupil Hijos, Mexico."
- <sup>36</sup> Ernest Legouvé of the Académie Française, urging Goupil to remain a member of their committee. The JCC contains a business paper of Goupil's, listing assets.
- <sup>37</sup> One of his *charro* costumes was borrowed by the academic painter Jean-Paul Laurens in Paris for a salon painting of *The Last Moments of Emperor Maximilian* (1882; Charlot 1963: 179). The family felt that painting was much more authentic than Manet's with its costumes fudged with smoke.
- <sup>38</sup> The act is described and illustrated in Charnay 1891: 223 ff. Also Calderón de la Barca 1966: 562. Charlot's family owned a watercolor of the subject, *Two Charros catching bulls by their tails*, 7-3/4" high X 11-1/2" wide, mat opening, signed Victor [last name illegible], now in the JCC.
- <sup>39</sup> Document in JCC. The direction of a note from Carolus Duran to Louis is also in the JCC, but without the note.
- <sup>40</sup> Kollonitz 1868 reports that guerillas and criminals made the roads insecure even around the Capital; 206, "The Empress was obliged to curtail her rides, and even then the roads had to be swept beforehand by French troops..."; 207, "The reports of an attempt upon her person belong to the domain of fable, though they have been widely spread both in Mexico and Europe." The JCC contains a card from the Emperor's Master of Ceremonies inviting Louis Goupil to a ball on July 10, 1865.
- <sup>41</sup> A large heavy square jaw is diagnostic for Native Americans. Similarly, my mother wrote to Odette (September 3, 1945) that the Aztec Luz Jiménez "worked for your mother for a while too, and she tells me that Ann is very like her in appearance, the same color eyes and shaped face."
- <sup>42</sup> The Colombier marriage was apparently unhappy. Until his daughter died, Louis was continually paying the debts incurred by her husband.
- <sup>43</sup> Jean Charlot to Carol Nelson, February 26, 1977, states that she was Mexican.
- <sup>44</sup> Brenner 1970: 303, "another married a Jewess of Spanish descent in Mexico City and with Maximilian's best wishes returned to Paris."

- <sup>45</sup> In Colorado Springs in the late 1940s, a Father ???? Freudenstein, a Catholic priest of Jewish descent, became a friend of the family. After dinner, Charlot would say goodbye at the door with “Goodnight to the both of you.”
- <sup>46</sup> Charlot did not usually distinguish his Jewish friends. An exception was Eugene Payor and his family, with whom we spent much time in family gatherings. Charlot said he enjoyed their “lack of chic,” by which he meant *chichi*.
- <sup>47</sup> Interview November 18, 1970. The Jean Charlot Collection contains B.-Clavel 1845; with the attached note: “Ce livre appartient au frère L. G. Goupil, M<sup>co</sup> 1<sup>er</sup> Janvier 1862” ‘This book belongs to brother L. G. Goupil, Mexico, January 1, 1862.’
- <sup>48</sup> The main source for the following is Labadie 1958: 132–157. Members of the Labadie family warned me that much of this book was fantasy, but that seems to refer to the earlier sections rather than the ones I use.
- <sup>49</sup> Labadie 1958: 134, gives 1829 as the date. Génin 1908–1910: 2, gives ca. 1845; Génin 1933: 347, 389.
- <sup>50</sup> Génin 1908–1910: 2, 35, 184; 1933: 389. Compare Barker 1979: 130. The family of Antonio Martínez del Campo still possesses one of the decorated porcelain pharmaceutical jars made for the Droguería de la Profesa. The Labadies were also engaged in tobacco and cigars, Génin 1933: 350; see also 351; Ferréol Labadie was in the medical profession, 390, 403; 1908–1910: 5.
- <sup>51</sup> For his activities in the French community, see Génin 1933: 399, 402 f. (his generosity). An H. Labadie also served as treasurer, Génin 1908–1910: 9.
- <sup>52</sup> Génin 1933: 435, mentions several people of that name in the French business community.
- <sup>53</sup> Génin 1933: 348 f., for the name Martel; 349, a Martel is mentioned as being in the same field of business as a Goupil.
- <sup>54</sup> Raquel married into the Camarena family.
- <sup>55</sup> Charlot to Odette, September 23, no year, 1940s, from Mexico City: “Nous voyons de temps en temps Dolly et Rachel—et les 8 petits cousins, 2 pour Dolly et 6 pour Rachel !” ‘We see from time to time Doly and Rachel—and the 8 little cousins, 2 for Doly and 6 for Rachel!’ December 20, 1959: “Cela a du te paraître étrange de voir nos cousins Mexicains. Tu ne les avait pas vus depuis Poissy ! Et tous les petits enfants déjà grands” ‘It must have seemed strange to you to see our Mexican cousins. You haven’t seen them since Poissy! And all the grandchildren already grown up.’
- <sup>56</sup> Interview May 14, 1971. Letter. Quoted in Jewell 1930.
- <sup>57</sup> Génin 1908–1910; 1933. Barker 1979.
- <sup>58</sup> Génin 1933: 436. Rolland 1990: 25, 38, 40.
- <sup>59</sup> Génin 1908–1910: 5. Contrast the hostility shown to Spaniards, Beezley 2008: 57.

<sup>60</sup> Génin 1908–1910: 12, the French and Mexicans should join together against the Anglo-Saxons; see also p. VII. Génin: “Lettre-Préface” XI–XV (in Boban I): XII. Génin 1933: XI: “Il est temps que la France, et avec elle les autres nations qu’on appelle latines, se défendent en Amérique espagnole contre l’avance yankee” ‘It is time that France—and with her the other nations we call latin—defend themselves in Spanish America against the Yankee advance.’ Barker 1979: 186, “a select fraternity of *races latines*, of which both France and Mexico were members.”

<sup>61</sup> Boban 1891, Volume 1: VII. John Charlot 1990–1991: 68. Cohen 1998: 22, 29.

<sup>62</sup> Génin 1933: front matter. Alexis Génin, Auguste’s father, was in the restaurant business and active in the French community’s affairs, Génin 1908–1910: 3, 9; 1933: 389, 400, 426, 435. Auguste himself was an industrialist, A. H. de León-Portilla 1988: 142.

<sup>63</sup> Keen 1971: 55, 149 f., 156–172, 311–314, 337 ff., 341–346, 414 f., 498. A. H. de León-Portilla 1988: 128, 136–142. London was also an important center of work in the field.

<sup>64</sup> However, Odette wrote on the cover of Génin’s *Poèmes Aztèques*: “Auguste Génin était très amoureux de Marguerite Goupil qu’il a toujours désiré épouser” ‘Auguste Génin was very much in love with Marguerite Goupil whom he always wanted to marry.’ The book is dedicated: “A Monsieur Louis Goupil Souvenir affectueux Auguste Génin Dec: 1889” ‘To Mr. Louis Goupil with fond memories, Auguste Génin, December 1899.’

<sup>65</sup> Davis 1981 biography of Charnay used Charlot as an informant; the relevant pages are xii, 16, 35 f., 127 ff., 188, 190. Davis’ main communication from Charlot was a letter of October 20, 1977, which I quote below. See also *MMR* 179 f.; Interview September 28, 1970. Génin 1933: 288 f.

<sup>66</sup> Charnay 1863: 513, “J’avais avec moi un jeune homme nommé Louis, qui, à Mexico, m’avait aidé dans mes travaux photographiques...” ‘I had with me a young man named Louis, who helped me in Mexico with my photographic work’; see also 514, 523 f.

<sup>67</sup> Charnay 1885: 143. Charnay seems to have liked Odette as well. She owned a copy of *Anciennes Villes* (1885) with the inscription: “À ma petite amie Odette Charlot Désiré Charnay” ‘To my little friend...’ Her marginalia show that she studied the book with her knowledge of the other family connections: “page 125 reproduit en relief, les 2 palais Toltèque de Tula et Teotihuacan = 2 + belle pierres Tombales au Trocadéro” ‘page 125 reproduces in relief the two Toltec palaces of Tula and Teotihuacan and two beautiful tomb stones at the Trocadéro’; at 128, “secrétaire de Charnay un jeune topographe dessinateur M. Albert Lemaire [Lemaitre?]” ‘secretary of Charnay, a young topographical draughtsman, Mr. Albert Lemaire’; at 397, Odette notes that the Boturini manuscripts are in the Goupil collection.

<sup>68</sup> Tabletalk March 6, 1972. For an adult version of the tale, see Charnay 1863: 534.

<sup>69</sup> Génin 1908–1910: 53. Labadie 1958:142, “Felipe Labadie y Aristid Martel fueron de los primeros iniciadores en México de la afición a la fotografía, secundados por la ayuda de Julio” ‘Felipe Labadie and Aristid Martel were the first initiators in Mexico of the love of photography, seconded by the aid of Julio.’

<sup>70</sup> Interview May 14, 1971. Compare Calderón de la Barca 1966: 22 (Havana), 168, 175. Zohmah Charlot writes to Ross Parmenter, May 4, 1981, that when Marie Adelaïde Goupil died in 1859, “she was buried in the crinolines of her grandmother.”

<sup>71</sup> Apollinaire 1965: 655 (an evocation of Mexico for Le Douanier Rousseau), 910. Charlot did not recall the author, but used the point to illustrate the ignorance of things Mexican in France.

<sup>72</sup> Julio Romo Michaud, a descendant of the photographer, kindly emailed me details of our families’ relationship (lightly edited):

Goupil house was connected with my great-great-great-grand father and his son who had the same name, Julio Michaud, and had representation in NY and Berlin.

That made things easier for Mr Julio Michaud so he could sell his productions in other countries.

What seems very interesting to me is the great contrast among Adolphe [Goupil] and Eugene Goupil.

Adolphe was a classicist as shown in the views at the gallery Port Allé in 1863 which was

made of Greek and Latin antiques.

Eugene was in contrast a great "connoisseur," a well of knowledge that met in Mexico with Mr. Eugene Aubin.

Eugene had the intelligence and appreciated the value of differences. That is why he was occupied a lot of time studying and collecting materials from ancient Mexico. I do not have

any doubt at all that Mr. Julio Michaud and his son were friends of the Goupil family and,

of course, of Desire Charnay. (November 10 2007)

so everybody is going to be able to see the work of Julio Michaud, Desire Charnay and Louis Goupil and the implications that all of these had with Jean Charlot, Diego Rivera and the links where artists became anthropologists and anthropologists became artists. (November 15, 2007)

<sup>73</sup> Compare the description of a French family naturalized in Mexico by José Vasconcelos 1982, Volume 1: 194 f. A member of the Martinez del Campo family is mentioned as a rich Spanish merchant by Calderón de la Barca 1966: Index.

<sup>74</sup> Charlot was certainly aware of the prejudice in some circles against Jews as marriage partners. In the early 1950s, he felt he had to bring this up to my sister, Ann, who was beginning to be interested in boys. She recalled that he spoke as if she might not know our family background, but my own memory is that we were well aware of our Jewish family connections.

- <sup>75</sup> Interview October 5, 1970. Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin, 1875–1946. Brenner 1970: 303, “Their daughter married a Frenchman from Russia sympathetic to the then persecuted Bolsheviks. He was Jean Charlot’s father.”
- <sup>76</sup> Interview October 5, 1970. Charlot never mentioned Victor Hugo’s attitude towards the poor, but as a child, he “went through complete works of Victor Hugo (verse)” (from Charlot’s notes for me about his early reading). Hugo was also a great favorite of Odette.
- <sup>77</sup> June 13, 1977. Similarly, when I left the Roman Catholic Church, my father did not try to dissuade me.
- <sup>78</sup> “Anita, what happens” and “Recibi cartas tuyas y dices.” I will discuss these in volume 2 of this biography.
- <sup>79</sup> May 12, 1928. Frances Flynn Paine regrets they will arrive in New York City in the August heat; Anita responds, “Je l’assure que je ne m’en fait pas de bile. Il n’en sera que ce que le Bon Dieu voudra” ‘I assure her that I’m not bitter because of it. It won’t be anything other than what the Good God will want’ (February 8, 1928).
- <sup>80</sup> Gérôme, May 11, 1824–January 10, 1904. The Académie Julian based its instruction on the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, emphasizing technique over theory. The Académie allowed its teachers—who included highest-level academicians—to give private instruction outside of class. Women were admitted and treated fairly, Weinberg 1991: 221–227; Weisberg and Becker 1999.
- <sup>81</sup> Weston 1931. See also Weston 1961: 43: “the refined Madame Charlot.” Carlos and Mrs. Mérida spoke to me at some length about Anne Charlot. Mérida interview January 29, 1971: “una persona de tanta finura espiritual” ‘a person of such spiritual fineness.’
- <sup>82</sup> Compare from the same letter: “Trop de Russes à la clef, se méfier des Slaves sur toute la ligne” ‘Too many Russians at the wheel, distrust Slavs along the whole line’; certainly an odd thing for her to say with her family background!
- <sup>83</sup> Odette’s papers record the granting on October 27, 1917, of her Baccalauréat de l’Enseignement Secondaire (Première Partie–Quatrième Série : Sciences–Langues vivantes du Baccalauréat de l’Enseignement Secondaire), Faculté des Sciences, University of Paris. In 1942, she was working in the Laboratoire de Paléoethnologie, Musée de l’Homme, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes. In an undated letter of the 1930s, Charlot comments on her new job: “ta nouvelle place n’a pas l’air mauvaise. Il me semble qu’elle cadre bien avec tes goûts scientifiques” ‘your new position doesn’t look bad. It seems to me that it fits well your scientific tastes.’
- <sup>84</sup> Bouvier 1941: “L’enfance de ma femme avait été dorée et à 18 ans, elle avait encore sa femme de chambre particulière” ‘The childhood of my wife was gilded, and at eighteen, she still had her own maid.’
- <sup>85</sup> “Le père Le Nohan,” pencil, 4-3/4” high/ base 6-1/2”/ top 3-1/4.” Profile of Madame Le Nohan, pencil, 3-1/16” high X 2-7/10” wide, irregular shape.
- <sup>86</sup> Interview October 1, 1970. See my discussion in Volume 2, Chapter 9.

- <sup>87</sup> E.g., undated letters to Odette, mid-1930s: “Un ami de Pierre Marquet est venu me voir avant de partir pour Paris. Est-ce que tu le vois encore” ‘A friend of Pierre Marquet came to see me before leaving for Paris. Do you still see him?’; “J’ai rencontré ici un vieux camarade de Condorcet, Pierre Leroy. C’est un flûtiste très connu” ‘I’ve met here an old companion from Condorcet, Pierre Leroy. He’s a very well-known flautist.’
- <sup>88</sup> *Juvenilia 1904*: 58b recto (trees); 13b recto (based on a Chinese ancestor portrait).
- <sup>89</sup> See the passage on the chick pea in his unpublished lecture “Western and Asian Art” of February 21, 1974. Charlot used Chinese art theories often in his criticism; for instance, he discusses Lola Cueto’s paper cutouts in terms of Lao-tsu’s teachings on emptiness, May 1947 “Papeles Picados.”
- <sup>90</sup> E.g., Charlot 1963: 179. Such folk statuettes were very appreciated in the nineteenth century, Calderón de la Barca 1966: 286, 295.
- <sup>91</sup> In 1997, the interior of the building was modernized for CIC Paris, but the façade was retained because it is *classée* ‘registered.’ The entrance on the crossroads façade was closed, and the building is now entered from the Charlots’ old address and from the cross street, 76, rue de la Victoire. The upper floors are now offices, but the windows Charlot used for his drawings and paintings could probably be identified. I was not allowed to enter.
- <sup>92</sup> When my mother took my brothers to the park in 1955, they crouched down and crept around to see it as our father would have as a child. In 1972, Martin remembered my father talking to him about going to the park with his nurse (1972).
- <sup>93</sup> Charlot wrote in 1937 (*AA I 61 f.*): “more painters were made conscious of their gift while making the round of museums than while standing in front of beautiful sunsets.”
- <sup>94</sup> Martin Charlot, May 14, 1999.
- <sup>95</sup> This may have been the *Arrival of Express at Lyons* by the Lumière Brothers, first shown on December 28, 1895.
- <sup>96</sup> Interview September 19, 1970.
- <sup>97</sup> Letter to Odette, August 10, 1957; November 20, 1960: “si différente de Paris, ou tout au plus, de ce que je me rappelle de Paris...de photographies de gens fameux. Il y en a tellement que je ne connais pas. Tant de temps écoulé !” ‘so different from Paris, or at least from what I recall of Paris...photographs of famous people. There are so many I don’t know. So much time passed!’
- <sup>98</sup> La Collégiale Notre-Dame de Poissy, Saint Louis 7, 78300 Poissy, France. See Accueil et Visite de la Collégiale: *La Collégiale Notre-Dame de Poissy* 1994. I thank Mrs. Bernadette Dieudonné for the information she kindly provided me on the church.
- <sup>99</sup> *AA I 91 f.* Charlot makes the common mistake of identifying Meissonnier’s *Campagne de France, 1814* with the retreat from Moscow.

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<sup>100</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Georges Dubuisson, the current owners of the Villa, received me most amicably, and Mrs. Dubuisson has kindly shared with me her research into their home. The earlier owners of the Villa were: from 1882–1905, Madame Veuve Guijon, Louise, Geneviève, née Descoings; from 1905–1942, Madame Veuve Guijon, Louise, Elisabeth, née Merlin, residing at 270, boulevard Raspail, Paris.

<sup>101</sup> The dates are provided on the plaque attached to the Villa. Stuckey 1995: 207 ff.

<sup>102</sup> The Villa was bombed to the ground by the British at the end of World War II in order to destroy the Renaissance bridge across the Seine about a kilometer distant. The street façade and landward side of the Villa were reconstructed in the rebuilding, but the garden façade and interior were redesigned.

<sup>103</sup> Although the garden has been changed, Mr. Georges Dubuisson feels the trees may date from the nineteenth century.

<sup>104</sup> The family kept photographs or postcards from Bruges and the Chasse Ste. Ursule, two later dated 1913 by Charlot. Anne and Odette Charlot visited Bavaria in 1913 and appear to have stayed with a family whose name was written alternatively Durr, Dürr, and Durh; photographs and a postcard record the visit.

<sup>105</sup> Interview October 31, 1970. The JCC holds photographs taken during Anne and Odette's trip. Charlot visited Italy in 1968 on the occasion of my marriage, when he returned for the first time to Europe since 1921. He wrote Jean Kellogg on August 9, 1957: "I am sure your world tour resulted in an increase of knowledge. I know that I still wish to see a few untransportable things: Ajanta, Francesca, Michelangelo, Giotto. Maybe some day if I am good" (Yale University Library, Manuscripts and Archives, Kellogg-Dickie Papers).

<sup>106</sup> Transcriptions from the Russian vary: *kulebiaka*, *kulebiáka*, *kulebjaka*. Some recipes call for both sturgeon and salmon.

<sup>107</sup> Charlot was unpretentious but could react negatively when treated disrespectfully. I see some resemblance to Cézanne in this attitude (Vollard 1919: 141 f.).

<sup>108</sup> Compare Madame de Lafayette's self-portrait, "Portrait de M. de\*\*\* fait par Elle-Même," 1990: 13 ff., p. 14: "Je pardonne sans peine et je me contente de mépriser ceux qui m'offensent. Ce moyen-là de se venger me paraît plus facile que tous les autres" "I forgive without difficulty and content myself with despising those who offend me. That way of avenging oneself seems to me easier than the others."

<sup>109</sup> Odette was very prejudiced against the English and in the early 1960s treated me to a very funny riff about them: "Everyone in the world drives on the right side of the street, but the English drive on the left. Everyone screws jar-tops one way, the English screw them the other." Then I said, "But they have very good poets." Odette: "So they say. Who can understand it?"

<sup>110</sup> Merle Armitage to Jean Charlot, May 18, 1946:

Will you make me a drawing of a Haiti or a Jamaika negro, all dressed up, and stepping high in a cake-walk, flat nose and elongated head, large rolling eyes? This will be absolutely necessary to my project, for *Prancing Nigger* must be designed in the most flamboyant style...dazzling in the best Harlem sense.

Charlot replied on May 27, 1946:

I would love to indulge your craving for a prancing nigger, but beg to be excused. If you have seen the work I did in the south (Charlot Murals in Georgia, Georgia University Press, \$6) you would know that the least thing that I would want to do is a funny negro. I suggest that you tackle Miguel Covarrubias...He is the master of that vein.

Charlot had changed his mind from his earlier judgment of Covarrubias' book: "Also Covarrubias : Success did not spoil him too much. His book on negroes is very good" (JC to AB "I don't remember if I send you the address of V. Arroyo's little girl").

<sup>111</sup> The full date, April 4, 1945, is written in another hand and may be the date of reception. The correspondence is in the Notre Dame Archives.

<sup>112</sup> Personal communication, Susannah Joel Glusker. Brenner was finally not in love with Jean and eventually married someone else.

<sup>113</sup> Charlot "Prologue, ou Présentation d'un Groupe de Graveurs sur Bois" 1924. Génin 1912: 308, uses *nègre* non-pejoratively.

<sup>114</sup> Other disputable texts are: "avec son képi d'or meublé d'un rictus nègre," *Pour aller à Bleau*, March 14, 1918; "et non le Christ toc que le Juif d'astuce vend," *C: ô que ma parole ne soit pas inutile*, undated [1919]; "Il ne sied pas que celui qui vous reçoit et vous mange reçoive et mange le vice—tel un azyne sarcastique—tenu en l'ostension noire par le Nègre cabossé d'or," *Méditation*, June 4, 1919.

<sup>115</sup> May 28, 1954. Charlot's reply is of June 23, 1954. The correspondence is in the Notre Dame Archives, and I express my thanks for access to it.

<sup>116</sup> Vasconcelos 1982 Volume 2: 81; see also 37. See Warner 1997: 1237; also 108.