

8. 1923–1925

The years 1923 through 1925 were largely filled with Charlot's work, discussed below, and the tensions between his religion and his romantic tendencies, discussed in Chapter 5. The narrative section below merely sketches the outline of Charlot's activity—discussed in detail elsewhere and in *MMR*—and a few of the remaining aspects of Charlot's life.

Despite his heavy work schedule, Charlot was leading an active social life. He saw his mother frequently, going with her to the movies and entertaining their friends. His diary reveals his almost daily contact with colleagues both for work and pleasure. He was also seeing a number of women to whom he was attracted, the most important being first Nahui Olin and then Anita Brenner.

Charlot continued to see his Mexican family throughout his stay. The significant change was the death of his uncle Aristide Martel in 1923, to whom he had already been close as a child in France. In Mexico, he stayed with him briefly and studied his connoisseur's collection of Mexican Indian art. Martel had visited him at the Preparatoria to view the *Massacre*. Charlot recorded his decline in his diary: “vu mon oncle il va très mal” ‘saw my uncle. He is very unwell’ (April 22); “AM vu mon oncle. tousote mal” ‘AM saw my uncle. bad cough’ (April 23). Martel rallied just as they had a Mass said for him over the opposition of Luz Priani, Luis Labadie's third wife, who had earlier objected to Charlot and his mother staying with the family (April 24, 26, 27). But on June 4 Martel died: “j'étais le voir. prié” ‘I went to see him. prayed.’ Charlot found family members already contending for Martel's legacy: “toute la famille appas l'héritage” ‘the whole family attraction heritage.’ Martel was buried on June 5, and Charlot helped with the disposition of his great collection (June 8). Charlot later dreamed of the “changement mort Aristide en ma mort (changement du masque seul)” ‘change of Aristide's death into my death (change only of mask)’ (19181923 Notebook C: “Rêve”). Charlot found no predictive power in the dream but did recognize “l'impression morale persistante” ‘the persistent moral impression.’¹ Charlot also saw the old family friend August Génin, who had been an important contact with Mexico while Charlot and his mother were still in France (Diary 1923: August 17, 28).

Charlot was spending most of his time with his rowdy artist friends, who were regularly overindulging in alcohol and—with the exception of some like Charlot—experimenting with peyote. Rivera was as enthusiastic about its artistic effects as he was about the technical virtues of *nopal* in fresco:

For a while, Diego Rivera experimented with the Mexican equivalent of opium, peyote, or to give it its proper native name, **peyotl**.

While the jag lasted, evenings he would wax eloquent, describing with what dynamic draftsmanship, what dazzling colors, he had painted that day.

A visit to his mural work the next morning disclosed none of the qualities he attributed to his spiked achievements.

Part of the magical frescoes had to be destroyed and repainted under normal conditions.

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The artist is also an artisan, one of a very special sort.

The art object is crafted by hand and should be built to last. As artisan, the artist must have able hands and steady fingers.²

Unfortunately, few of their hijinks were recorded, although Brenner and Charlot alluded to them:

The enthusiasm which inspires them is related to that of the Italian Renaissance. Like Leonardo they devour their task with a monstrous appetite and like him they enjoy school-boy nonsense when at rest... Like artists of the Renaissance they are illogical above logic, irrational to a degree higher than that of reason. To the observer they appear mad and fantastic...

He who minutely calculates the proportions of his future work by making his mark upon a blank wall with pistol shots—will bore his neighbors but will attract the professional interest of his fellow workers.³

Charlot left such stories out of his *MMR* because he wanted to make it “as dull as possible,” but he could not resist describing the raucous excursion of the artists to Guadalajara for the inauguration as governor of painter and art supporter Guadalupe Zuno.⁴

Such extreme behavior is more understandable against the background of violence at the time, discussed in Chapter 2: the assassinations of Senator Field Jurado, Obregón, and Manuel Hernández Galván, the executions of Felipe Carillo Puerto and Padre Pro, the Cristero revolt, and general banditry. The violence and brevity of life were met with characteristic Mexican humor.

Charlot was taking advantage of the cultural resources of Mexico City, often attending the cinema and French theatre when available. He also participated in at least one activity of a French veterans' organization: the memorial service for the World War I dead (Diary July 8, 1923).

Charlot continued his interest in boxing, attending the Mexican Heavyweight “fight to the finish” of the black Canadian Sam Langford on March 31, 1923: “Langford Sauvage. quelle belle âme” ‘Langford Savage. What a beautiful soul.’ He watched Langford again on April 8 (“très belle lutte” ‘very good fight’), May 6 and 19 (“très mauvais” ‘very bad’). Charlot continued to attend live matches in Mexico City, like the Argentinean Luis Firpo against Jim Hibbard (Diary June 17, 1923). He also watched newsreels of matches held elsewhere: Firpo versus Jess Willard in New Jersey (Diary August 2, 1923) and versus Jack Dempsey in New York City (Diary October 2, 1923), going on October 8 to see that classic fight again.⁵ Charlot himself continued to box with amateurs (Diary 1923: September 30, October 21, November 22) and even took some further instruction:

vu professeur pour boxe ‘saw professor for boxing’ (August 9, 1925)

Mr Marteau boxe je boxe aussi mal par faute d’entraînement ‘Mr. Marteau boxing I box pretty badly for lack of training’ (August 18, 1925)

Charlot was also swimming at one or more pools in Mexico City, and a photograph was taken of him and his young colleagues in their bathing suites.

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In 1923 and most of 1924, Charlot's main occupation was painting his murals, described in detail below. Vasconcelos had given his first commissions in 1920 to Montenegro and other Nacionalistas. Rivera arrived back in Mexico from Europe in early July 1921 and started *Creation* in early 1922, inaugurating it on March 9, 1923. Besides assisting Rivera, the young artists Charlot, Leal, Revueltas, Alva de la Canal, and Cahero were commissioned in May 1922 to paint their own murals in the Preparatoria. Charlot's *Massacre in the Main Temple* is dated October 2, 1922 to January 31, 1923; more precisely, the actual fresco painting was done from October 2 to November 25, 1922, and the lances were painted in encaustic in January 1923.

On February 18, 1923, Charlot, Amado de la Cueva, and Xavier Guerrero moved from the Preparatoria to the Ministry of Education to prepare for Rivera's work planned to start March 23. (Revueltas and Alva de la Canal would not finish their murals until later. Charlot records the "opening Alva Revueltas" in his diary for June 24, 1923: "dîner en honneur de Alba et Revueltas on se soûle" 'dinner in honor of Alva and Revueltas we get drunk.')

The three young artists were also to begin their own panels in the Second Court, which Vasconcelos had commissioned directly from them outside of the control of Rivera. From May to August, Charlot completed three fresco panels: *Cargadores*, *Danza de los Listones*, and *Lavanderas*.

Rivera had reacted negatively to the young artists' Preparatoria commissions, being generally obstructive, speaking and writing badly of them, and conveying false information about their work status. He continued this campaign into the period of their work in the Second Court and succeeded in having them dismissed (Diary 1923: July 9, 10, 16; August 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 16). Even after this success, Rivera continued to be difficult, culminating in the destruction of Charlot's panel *Danza de los Listones* (Diary 1923: September 24, October 3; March 11, 1925).

After being dismissed from his work in the Second Court of the Ministry of Education, Charlot immediately started assisting colleagues still on their jobs:

When the communal work in the second court of the Ministry was suspended in August, I joined Siqueiros as helper at the time he was working on the St. Christopher, and I painted in encaustic the vault above his wall.⁶

He also assisted Rivera. If Charlot's diary has been correctly deciphered, he also seems to have been used as a research and technical assistant for other artists on *escudos* 'shields,' the last reference being as late as May 21, 1925.⁷ References to *échafaudages* 'scaffolds' and one to retouching are found into 1925 (January 21, 22, 29, 30, February 5, 1925). As to his own painting, Charlot sought another wall but was assigned to painting shields on smaller panels, a duty that he felt as a demotion (e.g., Diary 1923: September 11, 12, 17). Throughout this period, Charlot recorded his disappointment and sadness at the collapse of a movement that meant so much to him: e.g., "grande amertume... grande grande tristesse" 'great bitterness... great great sadness' (Diary March 15, 1925). An indication of how personally he felt it was his dating the end of his period of the *Mexican Mural Renaissance* at the motorcycle death of Amado de la Cueva on April 1, 1926: "Amado's death marks the nadir of the initial upsurge of Mexican murals, which alone is the subject matter of this book" (MMR 313; 308313). For Charlot, the death of the movement was

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a long, painful process. Weston described him on October 31, 1924: “Jean Charlot wandered into the exhibit at evening, rather woebegone and discouraged: that is Mexico, it either raises one to ecstasy [*sic*] or dumps one into depths” (1961: 100).

From the beginning of the young artists’ work in the Preparatoria, opposition had been growing among the students, some journalists, and right-wing social groups like the Damas Católicas, eventuating in demonstrations and damage to the murals.⁸ The artists had defended themselves and Rivera, but Rivera himself distanced himself from what he claimed was their problem.⁹ These attacks were used successfully against Vasconcelos, who continued to defend the muralists.¹⁰ After Vasconcelos’ fall, the muralists were without a high-level government protector, and, in Charlot’s view, only Rivera’s superb diplomacy saved the murals from whitewashing and enabled Rivera and Montenegro to continue the movement.

Vasconcelos turned in his first resignation in late 1923 but was persuaded by Obregón to soldier on.¹¹ Despite demoting Charlot, Vasconcelos seems to have wanted to help him: “vu Vasconcelos qui me dit qu’il va m’augmenter” ‘saw Vasconcelos, who told me he is going to raise my salary’ (Diary October 27, 1923). Charlot noted receiving the \$2 raise to \$10 a week (Diary October 29, November 3, 1923). Vasconcelos later offered another salaried post to Charlot (Diary January 31, 1924). Their meetings appear social as well as professional: “vu ministre qui m’invite voir dans 8 jours. il me ramène en auto” ‘saw the minister, who invites me to see him in eight days. he drives me home’ (June 1, 1924); “1 h 35. ministre... puis il vient goûter chez moi” “1:35 PM, minister... then he comes to tea at my place” (June 9, 1924).

Vasconcelos resigned definitively on July 3, 1924, but Charlot’s government employment was extended for half a year until the end of 1924. Charlot was given a small government position, but continued to have difficulties receiving the money due to him: “I lived a while with a small job as draftsman for the Department of Publications of the Ministry” (*MMR* 313 f.). Charlot recorded that Orozco was transferred at the same time: “commissonné de dép des B. Arts — rentre au dép editorial. avec Orozco” ‘commissioned by the department of Beaux Arts—return to editorial department. with Orozco’ (Diary November 29, 1924). He describes their work there: the “new job was to sit behind a draftsman’s board and produce vignettes, chapter heads, and lettering for government publications” (*MMR* 293). As far as I know, none of these works have been identified or studied. In this office, Charlot almost certainly continued to render a variety of services.

Charlot and his mother were culturally and socially rich but monetarily poor. In his diary of July 28, 1925, Charlot wrote: “nous sommes très pauvres” ‘we are very poor.’ He put his hope in his mother’s work especially as a seamstress, which her husband Henri had ordered her to learn in case of such a reversal of fortune. Charlot recognized her contribution and felt some compunction about it:

Our situacion 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. (JC to AB “Don’t accuse me”)

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

Their poverty was compounded by the difficulty of getting the government to pay his wages—Charlot’s main form of income—which he mentions often in his diary.¹² The government work was also insecure as Charlot records: “on nous apprend que nos soldes au Ministère sont supprimés” ‘we are told that are salaries at the Ministry are suppressed’ (Diary November 14, 1923; again on December 5, 1924: “on m’apprend mon *cesse* dans le département éditorial [mon doit ?]” ‘I learn of my *discontinuance* in the editorial department [what’s owed me?]’ As Charlot suspected immediately, he would have to fight for his pay: “Official mayor pour recobrar cesse. on me doit mes 3 derniers mois atrasadas” ‘High official to recover my discontinuance pay. I am owed my three last months of back pay’ (Diary December 30, 1924). Charlot was inept at the politics of government patronage and also unlucky: he hoped to have Gamio’s support, but Gamio lost his government position as “He was just going to help me, naturalmente [‘naturally’]” (JC to AB “Tampoco escribes”; May 15, 1925 “I am so anxious”). Almost all of Charlot’s colleagues had money problems, as Charlot wrote to Brenner: “Tina says she doesnt understand why you didnt send her the money for your photos. She needs it” (May 17, 1924).

Besides his usual government work, Charlot received what were probably state commissions for particular tasks, like his 1923 costumes series and his 1924 *jarabe tapatio* series for Cultura Estetica, discussed below. Charlot did odd jobs like giving private French lessons. He managed to sell a few paintings. Alfons Goldschmidt, the German-Jewish Marxist, bought two religious pictures, as seen below. Francisco Sergio Iturbe, the pioneering collector, bought two paintings, including CL 76 *Eucharistic Congress* (Diary 1924: December 3, 11). Several Americans bought paintings, including several introduced by Weston (1925: October 11, 13, 14, November 29) and Tina (September 13, 1927). Charlot wrote Brenner on March 19, 1925, that he had sold three pictures “to a Los Angeles gringa,” otherwise he would not have survived. Non-government commissions were rare. Charlot painted the chimney in the home of a private friend (Diary September 8, 1924). He discussed one or two commissions for church decorations, but neither eventuated (January 18, November 19, 1925). Charlot won a prize of 250 pesos at an exhibition he had helped hang, *La Exposición del Libro* (Diary 1924: October 30, 31, November 1, 8, 20) and the same amount at an exhibition at the YWCA. in March–April 1925 (1925: March 21, April 7, 15). Some money came through Emily Edwards from the exhibition in San Antonio (December 10, 1927), discussed below.

As would be true throughout his life, most of Charlot’s jobs were unpaid—like his translating for Rivera’s lectures and preparing an exhibition of Rivera’s work (e.g., 1925: August 15, 25; October 7, 1926?) and perhaps other exhibitions (e.g., Diary 1925: April 24, 25, May 1, 16; 1927: September 24, December 23). Because of his language ability, Charlot was asked to provide art tours for visiting dignitaries, like D. H. Lawrence, Henrietta Shore, and perhaps Katherine Anne Porter.¹³ He contributed his illustrations to Estridentista publications and his intensive research and copying work for Anita

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Brenner and later his help photographing Orozco's murals. I have found no evidence that he was paid for his newspaper articles or editorial work for *Mexico Today*. When Ledesma spoke of paying him ten pesos for an article for *Forma*, Charlot was surprised:

vu Ledesma et *Forma* no 2 il me parle \$ 10 j'achète le livre sur art crétois merci mon Dieu.

'saw Ledesma and *Forma* no 2 he speaks to me of ten pesos I buy a book on Cretan art thank you, God. (Diary January 3, 1927)

When Charlot was paid, he often celebrated by buying a book: "acheté : la peinture nouvelle de Ozenfant" 'bought *The New Painting* by Ozenfant.'¹⁴ He even added to art collections he had started in France: "acheté Daumier" 'bought Daumier' (Diary October 7, 1928).

Charlot and his mother continued to live hand-to-mouth and suffer from it. A misunderstanding with Morley about pay provoked a "crise horrible de larmes" 'horrible crisis of tears' (June 28, 1926). Thanks are given to God when money finally arrives: "reçu cheques Morley : 75 et 280 merci mon Dieu" 'received Morley checks: 75 and 280 Thank you, God' (August 12, 1926). Charlot's poverty continued in the United States. He writes "pas d'argent" 'no money' in his diary entries of April 26, 27, 28, 29, 1929, until on April 30, he can at last enter "reçu 2 chèques : 75 du Forum et Carnegie" 'received two checks: 75 from *Forum* and Carnegie.'

Mexico City did not have a system of galleries with seasons of exhibitions, so art shows were occasional and rare. Charlot continued his French practice of recording details of the exhibitions in which he participated (e.g., April 1931). The first was *Exposición "Acción de Arte"* at the Escuela de Bellas Artes in November 1922, organized by Dr. Atl around his new journal *Acción de Arte*. Charlot exhibited his latest work, discussed below: "2 gouaches et 4 huiles (grosses têtes)" 'two gouaches and four oils (big heads)' (April 1931). Charlot's contribution was noted in two puzzled but appreciative newspaper reviews and three illustrations, discussed above (Chapter 6). Charlot was critical of the show: "l'ouverture de l'exposition aux Beaux Arts. mal" 'opening of the exhibition at Bellas Artes. bad' (Diary November 5, 1922). He explained to Walter Pach:

L'exposition ouvre aujourd'hui. On n'a refusé personne, ce qui pourrait constituer un salon des Indépendants, malheureusement la publicité a été peu faite, et parmi les gens du courant aucune révélation n'était à attendre.

Atl a fondé un journal "Acción de Arte", où il y a une parfaite présentation et de bonnes intentions, malheureusement gâtées par un futurisme assez 1914. (November 5, 1922)

'The exhibition opens today. No one has been refused, which could constitute a salon of Independents. Unfortunately, there was little publicity, and among the regular people, no revelation was to be expected.

Atl has founded a journal, "Acción de Arte," with a perfect presentation and good intentions, unfortunately spoiled by a Futurism a little 1914.'

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The critic Febronio Ortega had an equally negative impression: “La primera exposición de los Grupos Acción de Arte, es un fracaso artistico” ‘The first exhibition of the Groups Acción de Arte, is an artistic failure’ (November 1922).

The next show listed by Charlot was the Independents in New York City, organized by Walter Pach and held at the Waldorf Astoria from February 24 to March 18, 1923 (Chapter 7). Charlot sent two large heads and *Luz au Vase*, discussed below. Despite Pach’s tepid attitude towards Charlot’s work and the lack of any illustration of his work in the catalogue, an excellent notice was published in the *Brooklyn Times* of March 3, 1923:

the virile paintings of Jean Charlot, two of whose paintings, entitled “Man” and “Woman,” stand out boldly in contrast. Both of these display independence of spirit and a thorough acquaintance with modern art. (Clippings 12)

An illustration also appeared in *Arts and Decoration* of March 1923 (Clippings 11). Reviews of the exhibition itself were mixed (Delpar 1992: 141), but word of mouth judged it a failure and an illustration of the problems of presenting Mexican art to foreign countries (Writings Related to *MMR*: Appendix III). Mexicans of all sorts, including government officials, were anxious for cultural success in order to improve the public image of the nation.

Charlot participated in the famous *Exposición Estridentista* at the Café de Nadie, which opened on April 12, 1924.¹⁵ Charlot’s diary reveals that he was in Guadalajara on the day of the opening. He contributed “gouaches anciennes et gravures” ‘old gouaches and woodcuts’ (April 1931), which were illustrated twice in newspapers to represent Estridentista art (Clippings 16, 17). He was indignant about their label “Caricaturas estridentistas” in *Universal Grafico*:

I remember a reportage, for example, on the Café de Nadie in which it says that the walls show some Estridentist cartoons by Charlot. Well, the Estridentist cartoons are some, what I considered very good and very serious woodcuts of Mexican types. (Interview June 12, 1971)

In contrast, the next exhibition, *La Exposición del Libro*, was sponsored by the Ministry of Public Education and held in the government building, the Palacio de Minería.¹⁶ President Obregón attended the opening on November 1, 1924 (Diary). Charlot’s diary reveals that he hung the show hurriedly and in an unsatisfactory location.¹⁷ Weston and he won first prizes in their categories—Charlot’s for his *Via Crucis*—by a jury that included Rivera. Charlot was delighted: “j’ai gagné prix exposition \$250. merci mon Dieu” ‘I won exhibition prize of \$250. Thank you, God.’¹⁸

Charlot worked also on a show at the YWCA, April 25–May 1, 1925: “an exhibit of drawings, etchings and water colors in which artists from the San Carlos Academy, and several distinguished foreign artists, are exhibiting.”¹⁹ Charlot again showed his *Via Crucis* and watercolors of Amecameca: “je reviens avec 16 aquarelles pour l’exposition Ameca” ‘I return with sixteen watercolors for the exhibition: Ameca.’²⁰ The above article adds drawings to the list, and the notice by Mary Renfield in the *Mexican American* of May 2, 1925, adds “a group of heads” (1925). Two English-language reviews may

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be extracted from an original; for instance, both mention Charlot's winning a prize for his *Via Crucis* at *La Exposición del Libro* the year before. Renfield adds an appreciation:

Beauty of color, form and rhythm [*sic*] hold great interest for Charlot [*sic*]; his composition is clear and interesting. His most colorful scenes include painting of mountainous scenery, ancient churches and broad stone steps, flower-surrounded. A very good example of typical scenes is his sketch of an Indian woman carrying a child on her back in the native manner.

The English language and selection of subjects suggests a foreign readership in Mexico.

A major success, the Pan-American Exhibition in Los Angeles was scheduled for November 27, 1925–January 31, 1926, but held over to the end of March. The Latin American section of was regarded as an opportunity to showcase national artists (Delpar 1992: 142). In *El Universal* of November 6, 1925, “Gran Exposición de Pintores de Países Latinos” ‘Great Exhibition of Painters from Latin Countries,’ Rivera and Charlot were named as the representatives of Mexico in a subtitle: “Entre las Obras que se Exhibirán Figuran las de Diego Rivera y Charlot” ‘Among the Works that will be Exhibited Figure those of Diego Rivera and Charlot.’ Charlot was clearly identified: “Juan Charlot, también pintor mexicano” ‘Jean Charlot, also a Mexican painter.’²¹ Charlot showed his CL 115 *Great Nude, Chalma I* (Charlot April 1931), and though unsuccessful, he was in some people's mind Rivera's main rival for first prize (Andrews 2011: 27 f., 45). Weston wrote:

Diego Rivera received first prize, 3000 pesos, in the Los Angeles “Pan-American” exhibit. All we “Mexicans” are happy, though for my part I wish Jean might have won, if for no other reason than his actual financial need.²²

Charlot was also hurt that some objected to his exhibiting in the Mexican section, as he wrote Pach on October 27, 1925:

J'ai eu les pires ennuis pour l'exposition de Los Angeles, mes bons amis mexicains ne voulant pas me laisser exposer, comme étranger. Je crois tout cela arrangé maintenant, mais non sans difficulté.

‘I had the worst difficulties about the exhibition of Los Angeles, my good Mexican friends not wanting to let me exhibit since a foreigner. I think all that's arranged now, but not without difficulty.

On this subject, Charlot also wrote his “Letter to W. Alanson Bryan on his Nationality” (1925).

In the previous chapter, I discussed Walter Pach's exhibition of Art Work by Mexican School Children and Jean Charlot at the Art Center of New York, April 25–May 1, 1926, a project that started in 1925. Along with Pach's depreciating comments on Charlot (1926), joining his work with those of Mexican children seems an attempt to minimize it. Nonetheless, Charlot's painting attracted three appreciative comments. In the *New York Times* of April 25, 1926, the anonymous author of “Spring Days

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in the Art Galleries: First Showing by New York Society of Women Artists—Jean Charlot’s Mexican Paintings—Other Exhibitions” (Spring Days 1926) wrote:

With a simple ink outline Jean Charlot can build monuments. Under his pen the Mexican women he portrays achieve the substance and calm of great stone Buddhas. They are flesh, however, not stone. In his paintings, with a somewhat sinister humor, the artist allows himself to make comment more personal, without losing what seems an essential understanding of the people and the country. The paintings stretch along the wall like a religious procession.

In *The Arts*, May 1926, was written:

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

Reviews continued to be favorable. For instance, later in 1930, José Juan Tablada wrote:

Jean Charlot, who held a recent exhibition of paintings which were Mexican in subject, is a Parisian possessing all the French attributes, the emotional power and clarity of vision, aesthetic culture and inquisitiveness of the Gaelic (*sic*) mind together with an unprejudiced freshness of vision. His work is fascinating in its results. Lately, as a member of the Carnegie archaeological expedition to Chichen Itza, he has dug deeply into the vein of Mayan aesthetic tradition. Although he is French by birth, Mexico claims this artist as her own, as Gauguin was kin to Polynesia. Political geography must here give way to a geography of the spirit. (1930: 18)

8.8.1. FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES

As seen above, Charlot’s biography is inseparable from his friends and colleagues, whom I have included in the discussion at relevant points, especially Rivera, Siqueiros, and Leal. I will now summarize Charlot’s social situation before his departure for Chich’en Itza. These contacts include individuals he had met during his first year in Mexico; artists like Rosario Cabrera and Carmen Fonserrada are mentioned in his diaries. I will not discuss here people Charlot met later, like Sergei Eisenstein Alfredo Zalce, Ricardo Martínez, Lola Cueto, and Roberto Lago.

The amount of documentary evidence varies for each figure. For instance, I have been told that Charlot was close to the artists Federico Cantú (1908–1989) and that both artists enjoyed their shared Catholicism. Cantú wrote Charlot on August 19, 1948, thanking him for help with obtaining a position at San Diego State College: “por nuestra amistad de la que yo me siento tan orgulloso, o nuestra bandera

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católica...” ‘for our friendship of which I am so proud, or our Catholic banner...’ But details of their relationship are sparse. The artistic, literary, and governing circles were filled with interesting people at the time, and marginal figures can reveal an extraordinary depth. For instance, Maria Luisa de Gortari emailed me on August 9, 2010, about the identity of one of Charlot’s sitters:

Jean Charlot draw the portrait of Esperanza Velazquez Bringas when she was director of the National Library when Diego Rivera was painting the Murals at the Education Ministry. We have photographs of Diego Rivera and Esperanza at that time, and also with Edward Weston. She was my godmother, she cristened [*sic*] me in 1954, she was also my father's godmother. She gave me several works of art, and among them was her portrait made by Jean Charlot that has been with me for over 30 years. She was a very interesting woman...She worked for the socialist government of Felipe Carrillo Puerto in Yucatan, Mexico. She was very concerned about birth control at that time and wrote a booklet on birth control as a way to improve the life of the proletariat. She published several books, if you are interested I will send you her bibliography.²³

Ms. de Gortari emailed a twelve-book bibliography to me on August 30, 2010, along with the note: “Esperanza Bringas was a writer, lecturer and journalist that worked mainly for ‘El Heraldo de México’ and ‘El Universal’ newspapers.” Charlot’s 1925 diary is useful for dates and frequency of contact, but reveals little of the content of their relationship. On March 13, he is “présenté à Bringas” ‘presented to Bringas.’ Three days later, he starts or produces a “portrait B !” ‘portrait Bringas!’ (March 16). Charlot and Bringas meet often in the month (Diary 1925: March 17, 18, 20, 21 (missed meeting), 23, 24, 25, 30, 31). On May 19, 1925, he “donné portrait à Bringas” ‘gave portrait to Bringas.’ The next day, he produces “portrait secrétaire Bringas” ‘portrait of Bringas’ secretary’ (May 20).

Several of Charlot’s relationships have been studied in detail. Lew Andrews’ magisterial *Weston & Charlot: Art & Friendship* (2011) is a model study of artistic interaction. Charlot is prominent in several monographs on friends such as Luz Jiménez (*Luz Jiménez símbolo* 2000; John Charlot 2007), Pablo O’Higgins (1904–1983; Vogel 2010), and Emilio Amero (Zuñiga 2008). I have written extensively in this biography and elsewhere about Charlot’s relationships. This section is simply a supplement to the rest of this work and an attempt to identify certain general tendencies in his relationships.

First and foremost, Charlot liked people and wanted to have friendly relations with them. He made efforts to understand people, and his feelings for them were individualized. I was interested that in conversations he always called Rivera *Diego*. Siqueiros he called by his last name as he did Orozco. But in more personal statements, he could call him *Clemente*. Charlot often committed more to a friendship than the other person and was thus surprised at some slight or neglect. He could even be treated badly.

A related tendency was that—with the possible exception of Leal—Charlot did not let others determine his feelings for them. As seen below, he did not allow Orozco’s occasional hostility to turn him into an enemy. Charlot could be disappointed and hurt by his friends, but he tried maintain a relationship based on his view of them, which he developed as objectively as possible. Great artists were

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accorded much latitude. Definitive breaks were made only when someone proved impossibly untrustworthy and negative. But Charlot could tolerate much before that point was reached. Orozco, Siqueiros, and Zohmah Day felt Charlot did not defend himself. He did tend to avoid conflict, although he wrote formal letters to Rivera and Leal during their disputes. But, I believe, he also considered the positive results that could be achieved by some endangered relationships. For instance, his artistic work with Rivera could be considered more important than any smoother relations between them. His closeness to Orozco enabled Charlot to write more knowledgeably about him. When I was being attacked by a Hawaiian colleague, my father advised me just to take it: disputes were inevitable, but if they blew over, the group work could continue. Charlot removed much of his amour propre from his relationships, but difficulties in a friendship certainly influenced the closeness and warmth he felt towards the other.

Another tendency was to discover and support other artists, especially those who were awkward in promoting themselves. Charlot considered Manuel Martínez Pintao (1875–????) “el unico escultor en el Mexico actual (Did you read my article on him)” “the unique sculptor in Mexico today (Did you read my article on him)” (Charlot to Brenner “Excuse the paper”). The article—“Un Escultor: Manuel Martínez Pintao” (August 5, 1923)—was the first Charlot had written about an individual artist after the unpublished “Sur Diego qu’on Empêchait de Peindre” (March 1923). Both articles were supportive: a defense of Rivera and understanding publicity for Pintao. Pintao was childlike, but Charlot considered him also a true *hidalgo*, a representative of a Spanish ideal and a spiritual descendant of colonial art. His manners and physiognomy inspired a large number of portraits in oils, prints, and drawings:

Él, demasiado preocupado por su obra, profesa por la publicidad una indiferencia un poco desdeñoso...Es, pues, de justicia colocarlo en el verdadero lugar que le corresponde y que es de gran importancia. (August 5, 1923)

‘Too preoccupied with his work, he professes a slightly disdainful indifference for publicity...So it is only just to accord him the true place that is appropriate to him—which is one of great importance.’

Charlot also enjoyed his way of speaking, quoting to Brenner Pintao’s remark to Pablo O’Higgins: “Yo lo felicito. usted ya se quitó todo lo americano” ‘Congratulations. You have rid yourself of everything American’ (April 27, 1925).

Charlot’s efforts helped draw Brenner’s attention (*Idols* 9295) and eventually win Pintao his assured place in Mexico’s museums and art history. But the struggle lasted well into Pintao’s old age. Harold Leonard wrote Charlot on August 3, 1943: “You may be interested in the practical effect accomplished by one of the chapters in ‘Art from the Mayans to Disney’” (1939). Leonard’s mother searched for Pintao and found him “finally in Tacuba, living in great poverty and nearly blind.” He had been unable to work and had pawned all thirty of his remaining panels. Leonard’s mother bought two and was given a third to sell in the United States. Leonard felt that Pintao had been forgotten in Mexico since 1931 and had not been included in recent exhibitions on Mexican art. Charlot replied on August 18, 1943, that he had tried to get a show for Pintao at the Museum of Modern Art “to repair the gross

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injustice of having excluded him from their Mexican show. I hope that some action will be taken before Pintao ceases to care..." Answering Leonard's question about literature on Pintao, Charlot wrote:

The first reference to Pintao's work was in an article published by Diego Rivera in 1921. The next, the article I published in 1923 and that you read in "From the Mayans to Disney". Pintao at the time was quite adverse [*sic*] to showing his work or having photographs taken of it. Due to bad advice he had put prices on it of about \$10,000.00. Entirely between us and if you see fit to do it, I would like to have an idea of the prices you paid, so that I may send friends to him whom I think may help him also.

I would say that Pintao has been completely forgotten since 1930, his only friend besides myself being the painter Paul O'Higgins.

Charlot sent \$30.00 through O'Higgins to Pintao and then another \$100.00 to free his work from the pawn shop.²⁴

In the opinion of Charlot and Brenner, Francisco Goitia (1882–1960; sometimes spelled Goytia) needed not only support but protection: "Anita's protection of artists that Diego would have liked to annihilate, such as Charlot, Orozco, and Goitia."²⁵ When Charlot discovered Goitia, he wrote to Brenner, then working on her "A Mexican Renaissance" (September 1925):

If it is still time, hablas *de Goytia*. Acabo de descubrirlo y es grande: Misma generation than Diego, & sort of Diego con mucha paz. He lives in Xochimilco quite savage and if somebody comes to see him, he runs away.²⁶

'If it is still time, talk *about Goitia*. I have just discovered him and he is great: Same generation as Diego, and sort of Diego with much peace. He lives in Xochimilco, quite savage, and if somebody comes to see him, he runs away.'

Charlot informs her that Goitia was a draftsman for Gamio. He will try to find illustrations: "I'll try to have a reproduction if he is better humored than your other friends. Anyhow speak of him." The work chosen to illustrate Brenner's article was *Tatajesucristo*, given the French label: "Au pied de la croix deux femmes pleurent" 'At the foot of the Cross, two women weep.' Charlot continued to visit Goitia, to send news of him to Brenner, and to complain when he was neglected.²⁷ He also collected reproductions to illustrate texts by Brenner and others.²⁸ But apart from his laudatory pages in *MMR* (7780), Charlot seems mostly to have supplied materials and comments to others, and Brenner's chapter on Goitia is one of the most personal and perceptive in her work (*Idols* 288302). The reason for this might be found in a terrible incident my father related to me. He had greatly admired two large paintings at Goitia's house and told him that on his next visit, he would bring with him an admirer and possible buyer. When my father returned, he found Goitia had scraped both paintings down to the canvas (Tabletalk Undated, early to mid 1970s; compare *MMR* 80). My father was horrified and may have concluded that for fear of causing more damage, he had better put distance between himself and Goitia's "hypersensitive conscience."²⁹

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In contrast, Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre (1895–1979) was able to take care of himself. Professional Marxist, activist, lecturer and student leader, party founder and president, provocative intellectual, Haya de la Torre had been offered refuge in Mexico in 1923 when exiled from Peru. He and Vasconcelos became allies, and the latter always retained positive views of his friend, “un muchacho noble” ‘a noble buddy,’ even after he felt he became too influenced by Communism.³⁰ Charlot was amazed by Haya de la Torre’s talent for self-promotion, so contrary to Charlot’s own procedure. Charlot told me how Haya de la Torre would arrive in a town or city with a little typewriter and begin churning out press releases proclaiming the arrival of the famous politician, Haya de la Torre, and so on.³¹ He was also perhaps the politician who best understood the alliance of art and social activism in the current movement.

One of Charlot’s most interesting foreign friends was the German-Jewish Marxist economist and Latin American expert Alfons Goldschmidt (1879-1940), who has been called “Einer der wichtigsten Erbauer von kulturellen Brücken zwischen Deutschland und Mexico im 20. Jahrhundert” ‘One of the most important cultural bridge-builders between German and Mexico in the twentieth century’ (Patka 1999: 46; 4653). Goldschmidt was teaching at the University of Córdoba in Argentina when he was ordered to leave the country. Vasconcelos had met Goldschmidt there and invited him to UNAM as professor of political economy. Mexico was one of the few countries that was open to Communists. Goldschmidt taught influential students and wrote books on Mexico, but Vasconcelos regretted his decision, “engañado por su fama de experto” ‘fooled by his fame as an expert’ (1982 *Memorias* 2: 261). Vasconcelos claimed that nobody went to hear his lectures but “se hizo el cerebro de una faccioncita de intelectuales comunizantes” ‘he made himself the brains of a small faction of Communizing intellectuals.’ In 1927, however, Vasconcelos attended a conference in Brussels through Goldschmidt’s help. Goldschmidt was genuinely supportive and wrote a book about Rivera with whom he worked in the Communist Party of Mexico.

Goldschmidt admired also Charlot’s work, which he discussed in 1925 in one of the most understanding essays ever written on his work: “Der Maler der Indios in Mexiko: Jean Charlot” (published January 23, 1927), quoted below. I would say that he appreciated Charlot’s religious life the way Charlot did the social commitment of his Communist friends. Charlot’s German would have still been fluent so few years after the War and Occupation, and he probably enjoyed intellectual conversations in that language.³² He attended Goldschmidt’s lectures but found his attempts to enlist him and others into a party a “reunion politique idiote” ‘an idiotic political meeting.’³³ Goldschmidt —“enthousiaste” ‘enthusiastic’ (Diary October 28, 1924)— bought two of Charlot’s paintings, the earlier with a religious subject (CL 61, 89; Diary November 2, 1924; August 5, 1925). Charlot started an apparently large series of portraits of Goldschmidt.³⁴ Goldschmidt also wanted Charlot to illustrate a projected book on Mexico: “Goldsmith me pidio ilustrar su segundo libro sobre Mexico (discretion please.) El primero lo hizo Diego” ‘Goldschmidt asked me to illustrate his second book on Mexico (discretion please). Diego did the first one’ (JC to AB May 17, 1925).

Goldschmidt was also organizing an exhibition for Charlot in Germany through the film company UFA (Universum Film AG), with which he was working on a documentary in Mexico (Patka

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1999: 47; Diary 1925: August 10, November 7). My mother told me that my father gathered many artworks—including most of the preparatory drawings for the *Massacre*—that were sent to Germany. I have found no evidence that an exhibition was mounted, and no Charlot materials have survived, in all likelihood destroyed along with the documentary during World War II. Goldschmidt continued to travel and work against Fascism, but always kept his contacts to Mexico until he died unexpectedly in Cuernavaca.³⁵ I have no evidence of later contacts with Charlot.

As seen above, another collector of Charlot's work was Francisco Sergio Iturbe, who, unusually for Mexico, acted as a private art supporter. In late 1925, he promoted Orozco in Paris with an exhibition, a project in which he involved Charlot.³⁶

Of Charlot's friendships in Mexico, his relationship with José Clemente Orozco was the most complicated. A sign of how close Charlot felt to him is that he tended to group him with his own generation, although Orozco was older than Rivera. Orozco's son Clemente felt this was because his father's mind was always fresh and young until the day he died (personal communication, Clemente Orozco V., June 8, 2004). Charlot felt very strongly Orozco's genius as an artist and writer and once told his son Clemente: "Wait about 200 years to see who your father is."³⁷

Charlot felt that several of his colleagues displayed characteristics of genius. He considered that both Rivera and Orozco had psychic abilities.³⁸ Charlot's example was Orozco's inclusion of a swastika in his 1924 fresco *Social and Political Junk Heap*. No one knew what it was, and Orozco explained simply, "Oh, it's something going on in Germany now."³⁹ Despite Orozco's vociferous anti-clericalism, Charlot felt he was motivated by genuine religious feelings:

Orozco was one of those "bad men" of Mexico with whom I lived and grew up as an artist. A best friend on earth, I hope he is now a best friend in Heaven.

Orozco could never be a communist. He could not toe any party line at all. He could never be anything but himself. This man, who never painted a picture to suit a patron's taste, who never did a picture because he could sell it, at the end of his life painted this Crucifixion. In his youth he was anti-religious, or at least anti-clerical. Later he was compelled by some inner force to do religious pictures such as this one. He could not explain on rational grounds why he did Crucifixions and martyrdom scenes. He tried to rationalize it. In his own words, "Art is a religious expression. If a painter paints something that is anti-religious in its subject-matter, if it is art at all, it will be religious at the core."⁴⁰

An avowed freethinker opposed to all established order, and preoccupied with Marxist social goals, he never stopped to please either political friends or aesthetic foes.

[His religious subjects] "equal those of the Catholic Rouault in spiritual content."⁴¹

Charlot found many points of contact between their work. For instance, in France, Charlot had been interested in political cartooning to the point of making a collection of Daumier's prints. During the

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early period of their friendship, Orozco was still working as a cartoonist, and for Charlot, this became part of his artistic identity: “his cartooning experience accounts sufficiently for the boldness of his distortions” (1967 José Clemente Orozco). But a large part of Charlot’s interest in Orozco was the differences between the two, differences that surprised and intrigued Charlot as they arose. Whereas Charlot wanted his murals to be appropriate to their setting, Orozco was provokingly inappropriate. Whereas Charlot absorbed influences into a unified style, Orozco combined them with insouciance. When Orozco showed Charlot a dome he was painting (in Guadalajara?), he explained that he did not have to distort his figures because the curved shape relieved him of that task. Charlot was still astonished when he told me this story years later. He himself would have approached the commission with entirely different problems and aims in mind.

Charlot was early interested in writing and writings about Orozco and devoted more text to him than to any of his colleagues.⁴² Orozco needed interpretation as his art moved out of Mexico. Brenner reports the criticisms of the art dealer and critic J. B. Neumann: “Clemente’s sketches are not pure art, and are ‘insulting’ to lovers of pure art. I told him I had no doubt about what they were” (Glusker 2010: 538). Orozco’s *Horrores de la Revolución* in particular was either disliked or ignored (Indych 2001: 159161). Charlot’s efforts to present and explain Orozco’s work at his 1929 exhibition at the Art Students League of New York were described by Alma Reed, Orozco’s helper (see below). Reed felt that Charlot with his “unfailing sympathy and understanding” for Orozco’s work was “the fellow artist perhaps best qualified to appreciate his work and character” (Reed 1960: 48, 59). Charlot’s article “José Clemente Orozco: Su Obra Monumental” (June 1928) she found “The most profound interpretation of Orozco’s significance” (Reed 1960: 20).

In the Mexican period of their friendship, Charlot and Orozco shared much of their working lives and activities and their family homes. They met together and in groups, viewed each other’s artwork, shared a female model, and suffered together during the suppression of their mural work⁴³ Charlot would accompany Orozco when he bought the latest newspaper editions to see how his cartoons appeared (Tabletalk, 1971?). While a lonely bachelor, Orozco would often dine with Charlot and his mother, with whom he seems to have established a respectful, affectionate relationship (e.g., Orozco 1987: 101, 120, 123, 126, 149; 1974: 35, note 19 [Charlot]).

Relationships with Orozco were usually difficult: “Orozco est insupportable” ‘Orozco is intolerable’ (Diary March 22, 1924). But the only serious disturbance of their friendship at this time occurred in November 1925, when Orozco objected to the publication of one of his ink drawings, *The Wake*, in *Mexican Folkways*.⁴⁴ Orozco was repudiating his work as a cartoonist and felt that recalling it was a plot by Rivera. In his letter of November 10 to Charlot, Orozco places the blame for the publication on the publisher and general editor, Frances Toor, but he knew that Charlot was the art editor of the journal. By attacking her, he was attacking Charlot indirectly. Similarly, when Orozco later attacked Brenner’s *Idols Behind Altars*, he must have been aware of Charlot’s widely recognized influence on that book. Charlot refused to hide behind Toor. He replied to Orozco in the only letter of his that Orozco kept from this period:

Querido Orozco

Yo soy el unico responsable en lo que concierne *la ilustración* de la Revista.

Ni Goya, ni Daumier, ni Lautrec se hubieran avergonzado de firmar el dibujo tuyo que publiqué.

Me quedo, cualquier sea tu actitud conmigo, tu muy sincero amigo y admirador.

Jean Charlot

Dear Orozco,

I am the unique person responsible for the illustrations of the Review.

Neither Goya, nor Daumier, nor Lautrec would have been ashamed to sign the drawing of yours that I published.

I remain, whatever your attitude be towards me, your very sincere friend and admirer.

Jean Charlot

In his reply, Orozco backed down: “Tienes razón, eso del dibujo no tiene importancia...” “You are right, the matter of the drawing is not important...” But he continues to affirm his pain that “mis amigos” “my friends” should participate in Rivera’s “intrigas” “intrigues.”

Charlot considered the episode significant and was careful to preserve a copy of the illustration, whose importance he emphasized to my mother and me. The close of Charlot’s letter indicates that he now faced the possibility of Orozco’s changing his attitude towards him and had decided how he would himself react. As in his other relationships, Charlot intended to determine his position himself. Charlot’s diary entries show that their positive, intimate, and mutually helpful relationship continued until their major dispute of 1929. They continued to socialize together as well as with their families, colleagues, and visiting artists, visiting exhibitions and viewing each other’s work.⁴⁵ Orozco could always erupt. On January 23, 1928, in New York, Brenner reported that he was “just furious about my article in the World.”⁴⁶ When Orozco left for the United States on December 11, 1927, Charlot was the only person to see him off at the station (Orozco 1987: 182).

Orozco left Charlot with major tasks. Most important and onerous was photographing Orozco’s murals with Tina Modotti.⁴⁷ Orozco directed the operation through letters, pressing Charlot and Tina while acknowledging the magnitude of his requests (Orozco 1987: 125, 127 ff., 132 f., 140). He wanted Charlot to direct the photography and worried that he would leave Mexico before the job was done (Orozco 1987: 130). The photographs display both Charlot’s and Tina’s comprehension of the relation of Orozco’s frescoes to the architecture. When Charlot did come to New York, Orozco wanted him to bring the photographs with him (Orozco 1987: 127). Ultimately, the photographs were extremely valuable in promoting Orozco, whose major achievement was immovable frescoes. Photographs of his murals were included in exhibitions of his smaller original works and were used as illustrations in publications.⁴⁸ Ominously, Orozco’s letters on the project are charged with his suspicions of the very people who were

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helping him. He worries that Brenner is speaking ill of him to Charlot (Orozco 1987: 127). As little as possible should be said about his plans “especialmente en campo enemigo como la casa de Tina” ‘especially in the enemy camp like Tina’s house’ (Orozco 1987: 127; also 131).

Charlot was running other errands for Orozco as well like collecting his papers and effects to bring to New York.⁴⁹ Orozco was worried because his artwork had been destroyed by customs on his first trip to the United States, so at his request, Charlot hid some of the Revolutionary Series in his trunk underneath his own things. This created a psychological burden for Charlot on his first entry into that country, especially since he was already having difficulties with Mexican customs and would later with those of the United States.⁵⁰

On October 27, 1928 (Diary), Charlot and his mother were met at the New York City station by Orozco and Brenner. At first, the two artists reestablished their old friendship. Orozco helped Charlot buy a coat and look for an apartment (Diary 1928: October 29, 30). They socialized and visited exhibitions together, and Orozco introduced Charlot to his friends.⁵¹ Charlot even roomed occasionally with Orozco (Diary 1929: April 9, 10, 11). Charlot also resumed helping Orozco, most importantly, working with Thomas Hart Benton and Christian Buccheit to hang Orozco’s important exhibition at the Art Students’ League, which opened on April 15, 1929.⁵² The effort was enormous, but the show was such a great success that it established Orozco as an artist in New York. Orozco was delighted with his success (1987: 157 f.). Reed remembered him as “exultant”: “Joy illumined his whole person” (1956: 109). After the opening, Charlot promoted the show tirelessly:

Charlot was one of the organizers of Orozco’s comprehensive retrospective show at the Art Students League in 1929. His painstaking efforts in the arrangement and hanging of the huge collection, his untiring zeal in creating interest in the event and his numerous lectures on the significance of Orozco’s art during the exhibition, all attested to his generous spirit and to his capacity for loyal camaraderie. (Reed 1960: 70)

Unfortunately, Charlot’s work with the exhibition resulted in a dispute with Orozco that damaged their relationship. Charlot never wrote about the dispute or spoke about it even, I believe, to my mother. Even the diary is as allusive as it was about Rivera’s destruction of *Listones*. I learned about the event only because I asked my father in 1971 about a passage in Orozco’s letter to him of February 19, 1929:

No te había escrito por dos cosas, primero porque creía que ya no querías dirigirme la palabra más y esperaba tus noticias y segundo por la cantidad de trabajo y las pocas horas del día. (Charlot 1971: 129; 1974: 83)

“I hadn’t written you for two reasons, first because I thought you didn’t want to speak to me again and I was waiting to hear from you, and second because of the amount of work and the few hours in the day.”

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Orozco had accused Charlot of trying to sabotage his career by the way he had hung the show (Tabletalk, 1971). Orozco was characteristically feeling simultaneously the exaltation of public triumph and its opposite, as Brenner wrote: “He is shaky with Jean. The downcurve is that he is ill, afraid, angry, and feeling persecuted.”⁵³ Charlot had placed the series *Mexico in Revolution* on a long prominent wall and the oil paintings on a smaller side wall. People told Orozco that Charlot had done this because he did not want the oils to sell because they would earn more money than the washes for Orozco.⁵⁴ Orozco believed this at least partially and remonstrated with Charlot. Also, in one of the photographs of Orozco’s murals by Tina Modotti, Charlot had stood on the side to indicate the scale. People told Orozco that he had done this to take credit for the mural, and Orozco cut Charlot out of the photograph. Orozco was so angry that he was deliberately and publicly rude to Charlot. When Charlot visited Alma Reed, “Clemente est là et m’a abusé. très grossier” ‘Clemente is there and abused me. very coarse’ (Diary May 3, 1920). On October 14, he recorded: “vu Clemente : attitude insultante. [!!]” ‘saw Clemente: insulting attitude!!’; on November 14, “soir : causé mex. vu Clemente : très impoli à nouveau !” ‘evening: chatted in Mexican. saw Clemente: very impolite again!’ Charlot suffered from this behavior. On the same evening, he entered in his diary: “soir : crise de grande tristesse à cause d’isolement” ‘evening: crisis of great sadness because of isolation’ (November 14). Charlot felt Orozco was different with him “for ten years afterward” (Tabletalk, October 21, 1971). Orozco then vetoed Charlot’s projected exhibition at the Delphic Studios.⁵⁵ Indeed, Charlot is prominently absent from the long list of Mexican and United States artists who exhibited there.⁵⁶ Reed had founded the gallery along with Orozco primarily to promote his work, and he was in all likelihood the only person with the power to exclude an artist, as was done with Rivera.⁵⁷

Charlot had in fact emphasized the series *Mexico in Revolution* because he considered it a high point of Orozco’s work. Indeed, in this and later exhibitions, the series was usually singled out for praise.⁵⁸ Charlot felt it was an artistic “mortal sin” that Orozco never turned the full series into lithographs (Tabletalk early 1970s). Orozco later realized the series’ popularity and thus its sales potential and made several lithographs based on it (González Mello 2002a: 36, 81, 83). Before the Art Students League exhibition, Orozco himself had emphasized the series in his first New York show in 1928. Although the show had not been successful, Orozco kept the series intact and sent it to represent his work at an exhibition in Paris.⁵⁹ Only later did Orozco occasionally express a desire to emphasize newer, quieter works (González Mello 2002a: 56).

When my father spoke about the dispute to me some forty-two years after it happened, I could still feel the shock in his voice. After all he had done for Orozco, he could not understand how his friend could have believed the negative gossip endemic in the art world.⁶⁰ Charlot could only speculate on why Orozco had turned against him. He felt that Orozco had been traumatized by the persecution he suffered from Rivera, which resulted in the damage to Orozco’s frescoes. Orozco was “psychopathic” on the subject, worried that he would be assassinated or that his wife and children would be kidnapped if he brought them to New York.⁶¹ Charlot felt also that Orozco was insufficiently confident in his own work, so would be over-sensitive to perceived dangers to his career. In his writings, Charlot mentioned Orozco’s generalized anger, his choleric temperament, that was a source for his creation: “As he rose to acclaim, Orozco stored enough fuel of resentment to power throughout the rest of his life many a bitter

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masterpiece” (Charlot Fall 1956: 85); “strain, and stress, and turmoil, were the main motors of Orozco’s inspiration” (87).

Orozco informed people of the dispute. For instance, in a letter to Juan Jorge Cuesto of December 28, 1932, Orozco wrote: “Charlot y yo ya no somos amigos” ‘Charlot and I are no longer friends’ (Orozco V. 1983: 156). Writing to his wife on October 5, 1929, he grouped Charlot among his enemies (Orozco 1987: 167):

La Brenner asegura en su libro que Mastadonte, Alfaro Siqueiros y Charlot son judíos, les saca su genealogía. ¡¡Ahora me explico todo!! Me dan ganas de mandarles a todos ellos mis felicitaciones de año nuevo pues precisamente ahora es primero de año judío.

‘The Brenner asserts in her book that Mastodon [Rivera], Alfaro Siqueiros and Charlot are Jews, and brings their genealogy to light. Now I understand everything! They make me want to send them all my New Year’s greetings, because just now is the first of the Jewish year.’

Visual expressions of this anti-Semitism can be found in some of Orozco’s cartoons and perhaps his mural caricatures. Orozco’s enmity had an impact on Charlot’s reputation and career beyond the loss of the Delphic Studios show. Thomas Hart Benton felt he had to clear with Orozco the plans for a Charlot exhibition:

Hace algunas semanas el Charlot hizo una exhibición en Arts Students League, donde hice la mía, valiéndose del nombre que dejé ahí. Se la arregló Benton el cual me consultó antes y yo no quise impedirlo para que no vayan a decir que soy envidioso o díscolo.

‘Some weeks ago, the Charlot had an exhibition at the Art Students League, where I had mine, exploiting for himself the name that I left there. Benton organized it; the same consulted me before, and I did not want to block it so that they wouldn’t say that I’m envious or intractable.’⁶²

More recently, Raquel Tibol stated that Orozco “se dio cuenta del oportunismo y protagonismo” ‘realized [Charlot’s] opportunism and desire to play the lead’ (Terrazas 1994). Anreus writes cautiously “The correspondence with Charlot stopped, due to misunderstandings and a sense of competition between the two artists.”⁶³

In fact, friends and members of Orozco’s own family did not know what had happened. Margarita wrote Charlot on July 4, 1971:

¿Quisieras ilustrarme acerca del distanciamiento que ocurrió entre Clemente y tú a raíz de que llegaste a Nueva York?. Creeme que esto me dará una versión que deseo conocer pero que no trascenderá mas allá de me persona.

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‘Could you clarify for me the distancing that occurred between Clemente and you right after you arrived in New York? Believe me, this will give me a version I want to know, but it will go no further than me.’

No record exists of a reply by Charlot, and in her *Memorias*, dictated in 1982/1983, Margarita could write only generally:⁶⁴

Les brindó su amistad sin pensar nunca en un posible beneficio personal. Si alguna vez cambió radicalmente su actitud hacia alguna persona que había considerado amiga, fue sin duda porque ésta había defraudado de alguna manera su confianza. Tal fue el caso con Jean Charlot, Juan José Tablada y Alma Reed.

‘He gave them his friendship never thinking of any possible personal benefit. If ever he changed radically his attitude to someone whom he had considered a friend, it was without doubt because that person and in some way defrauded his confidence. That was the case with Jean Charlot, Juan José Tablada, and Alma Reed.’

In my conversations with Clemente Orozco of June 8 and 9, 2004, he emphasized that his father had not discussed the dispute either with him or with his mother. Orozco in fact never discussed personal matters. In twenty-two years, he never spoke to Clemente about his own family; Clemente had to learn about them from other people. Consequently, Clemente Orozco could only speculate about the dispute between his father and Charlot. In his *Orozco, Verdad Cronológica* (1983: 256 f.), Clemente blames the dispute on Charlot’s emotional relationship with Anita Brenner and his resulting collaboration in her faulty *Idols Behind Altars*. In our conversations, Clemente expressed his view that Charlot was young and insufficiently aware of Orozco’s greatness. Orozco was an older, philosophical man and had false expectations that Charlot would be more mature. But Charlot identified with his own generation and agreed with younger people like Anita Brenner who were unfair to Orozco. Orozco was very disappointed, especially because he needed allies against Rivera and others. But Charlot’s only crime—which was no crime—was that he was too young. Charlot probably did not answer Margarita’s inquiry because he was sorry. Orozco, Clemente felt, was the only genius of America, and geniuses are always alone.

Charlot’s case was only one of several in Orozco’s life. Orozco habitually turned against those who helped him, even while they were doing so.⁶⁵ Anita Brenner had tirelessly defended Orozco and promoted his art, but because he disagreed with her views in *Idols Behind Altars*, he considered her an enemy, even trying to block the publication of her book.⁶⁶ Alma Reed was Orozco’s greatest champion, even supporting him and his family for a time, but he broke with her and wrote to his friends accusing her of dishonesty (the two were later reconciled).⁶⁷ While Tina Modotti was photographing Orozco’s murals at his request, he wrote his wife that she should say little about his activities in New York, “especialmente en campo enemigo como la casa de Tina” ‘especially in the enemy camp like the house of Tina’; he wanted Modotti to continue working but not to know how important the photographs were to him.⁶⁸ Charlot was not exempt from such suspicions; worried that he had not heard from Charlot, Orozco wrote his wife on September 5, 1928: “no sería difícil que la Anita me haya puesto ya en mal con él” ‘it would

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not be difficult for the Anita [Brenner] to have already put me in the wrong with him.’⁶⁹ Orozco wanted Charlot’s assurance several times that he was not offended (Charlot 1971: 61, 73, 78). Orozco was vulnerable to gossip against others like Reed (Orozco 1987: 189). When his major New York patron, Eva Sikelianos, arranged an exhibition in Paris that was unsuccessful, Francisco Sergio Iturbe wrote to Orozco that the “ill-willed Greek woman” had sabotaged his show; Orozco broke with her (González Mello 2002a: 55).

Orozco wrote Charlot’s mother that he found in New York “solo...egoísmo y falsedad y mala fe” “only self interest and deception and bad faith” (Charlot 1971: 47; 1974: 34). I believe this was his general attitude, which colored his views of even his most ardent admirers. As Brenner wrote, “his personal life is divided sharply into religiously subject friends and rank enemies” (*Idols* 269). The enormous anger that inspired his masterpieces overflowed onto many who loved him. I believe also that he violently resented the fact that he needed help and thus helpers. Helpers as such were above him, a situation he needed to reverse: *they* had to need *him*.⁷⁰ He suspected and soon managed to discover their true motives: to use him for their own advantage. The ups and downs of his relationships accord with someone who is both needy and suspicious. As I stated above, Charlot himself felt that Orozco lacked self-confidence (Tabletalk early 1970s, 1971?, 1971?). Anxious to succeed as an international high artist, he rejected his cartoonist past and filled his work with elements he felt would be recognizable high art: the “Cubist” background of *The Destruction of the Old Order* and his newly discovered tropes of Expressionism. Orozco’s cartoons have come to be recognized as important (e.g., Cervantes and Mackenzie 2010: 582). Charlot always felt Orozco was greatest as himself.

The sustained efforts of Orozco’s friends to help him reveal the high estimation they preserved of his person and his art. The difficulties they faced are recorded in Anita Brenner’s journals. On January 18, 1928, she writes:

With Clemente it is a struggle to be *orientado* [oriented, on track]. I hate to have [Octavio] Barreda and Tablada talking to him. They are destructive people. I suppose it will have to be a “struggle for the soul” of Clemente, but I am sure that in any issue he will listen to me instead. (Glusker 2010: 574)

It is awfully hard to help him, even as little as I can. He won’t recognize the way things are, or he wants absolute values...Anyway it was very upsetting. (576, January 23, 1928)

This morning, letter from Clemente. Outrageously and violently, via special delivery, wanting all his things back and me not to do anything about them anymore. I made a mistake in trying to talk about things objectively with him. And he thinks I’m a propagandist! They win... (580, February 2, 1928)

On March 24, Orozco is friendly again, and she will continue promoting him (Glusker 2010: 596, 625 f. 633, 635, 641, 647, 651, 654). But Orozco continues to be conflicted about the need for publicity (635) and takes her help “and then distrusts my motives”:

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I suspect that after a while, if not already, he will decide that the mags. and papers and galleries are all in secret league (Jewish), and that they want to “put over” Diego and therefore deliberately ignore or squash him. (644)

Orozco was soon scolding her again and asking for money.⁷¹

After the Art Students’ League estrangement, Charlot tried to reestablish his relationship with Orozco and continued to write positively about him. He also continued to promote Orozco’s work: “Carnegie puis Philips et lui vendre litho de Orozco” ‘Carnegie then Philips and sell him lithograph of Orozco’ (March 16, 1929); “Claudel. allé voir l’œuvre de Orozco chez Alma” ‘Claudel. went to see Orozco’s work at Alma’s’ (Diary September 13, 1929). Charlot’s closing of his 1925 letter to Orozco on his *Mexican Folkways* illustration can be read as a promise: “Me quedo, cualquier sea tu actitud conmigo, tu muy sincero amigo y admirador” ‘I remain, whatever your attitude be towards me, your very sincere friend and admirer.’

Clemente emphasized repeatedly to me how much his father had lost in the dispute: “My father did not make friends easily.” “Your father was his last friend. He was the last person on earth...”; his “real last friend. He was the last one my father considered a real friend”; “The last person—except maybe for childhood friends—for whom he used familiar forms”; “He never addressed anyone else by the familiar.” To Bronwen Solyom, curator of the Jean Charlot Collection, Clemente said “that his father told him that Jean Charlot was his ‘best friend.’”⁷² Clemente stressed to me that his father wrote Charlot as if he were writing to himself, with no self-censorship. Even in his letters to his wife, Orozco never discussed art; Charlot was the only person in whom he confided. Charlot, Clemente guessed, probably did not realize this, but Orozco expected a response in kind. Baciú reports that Orozco was known as Charlot’s “*cuate*” ‘twin, pal, buddy’ (1982: 3). Even at the height of their difficulties in New York, Orozco could be kind: “Clemente me donne 1 dollar et me paie le ciné. pas d’argent” ‘Clemente gives me a dollar and pays for the movie for me. no money’ (Diary April 27, 1929).

At the time of the dispute, Charlot did try to maintain his relationship with Orozco, writing the letter to which Orozco replied on February 19, 1929 (Charlot 1971: 129). He also attempted to meet with Orozco: “El Charlot ya le anda por verme pero no ha podido averiguar mi dirección” ‘That Charlot is already trying to see me but has not been able to find my address’ (Orozco 1987: 167; October 5, 1929). Both artists had exhibitions in New York, and Orozco wrote:

Yo no fui para nada, pero en cambio sí vinieron a mi exhibición y ya no hallan la manera de volver a conseguir mi amistad, pero yo ya tengo suficiente experiencia.

‘I certainly did not attend his, but [Charlot and Brenner] certainly came to my exhibition, and they did not find a way to get back into my friendship; I already have enough experience.’ (1987: 189 f.; February 10, 1930)

Charlot did feel that Orozco returned to his former attitude “ten years afterward” (Tabletalk, October 21, 1971). No document exists for 1939, but Orozco did help Pablo O’Higgins in 1943 when he was trying unsuccessfully to organize an exhibition for Charlot in Mexico: “llevé tu carta a Orozco, y le

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pareció muy buena idea” ‘I took your letter to Orozco, and it seems to him a very good idea.’⁷³ Orozco wrote positively to Charlot on April 18, 1943, using terms of affection and the intimate *tu*: “Muy querido Jean”; “Te abraza Clemente” (John Charlot 2008 *Una carta inédita*). On Charlot’s projected history of Mexican muralism, Orozco wrote:

Puedes reproducir en tu libro cualquier tontería que haya yo escrito pero creeme que me arrepiento de cuanto he escrito. No pongas nada que sea contra los compañeros de oficio.

‘You may reproduce in your book whatever foolishness I have written, but believe me that I regret how much I have. Don’t put in anything that is against our professional colleagues.’

In 1945, Orozco asked for Charlot’s advice on a New York gallery.⁷⁴

Charlot considered including Orozco’s 1943 letter in *The Artist in New York* (1974) to end their correspondence on a positive note: “It is of the 1940s and will need an introduction of its own, but makes a nice postscript to the letters of the 1920’s” (Charlot to Frank Wardlaw August 3, 1972). However, Orozco continued to be prickly:

We have indeed met more than once and you were kind enough to play a game of chess with me one day in your Mexico City house when your dear father was not in the mood to receive me. (Charlot to Clemente Orozco V. May 31, 1975)

In our conversation of June 8, 2004, Clemente remembered that his father was indeed occupied that day. After the dispute, Clemente assured me, Orozco “never resented your father.” Orozco never spoke badly about other people. When Charlot returned to Mexico in 1945, Orozco was fully established, so he had put his negative feelings behind him. But the Orozco-Charlot relationship was like a broken glass; the great confidence between them was lost.

Charlot did remain a friend of the family. While working on the English version of Orozco’s letters, Charlot described Margarita Orozco to the editor Frank Wardlaw as “a good friend” (November 24, 1973), and the correspondence between him and family members is affectionate. After Charlot’s death, Clemente Orozco wrote his widow (April 12, 1982):

You can’t imagine how much I miss Jean now. Like with many friends, when one wants to talk with them, they are not here anymore. We never appreciate them enough when they’re here with us.

8.2.

ART

In his Ludwigshafen Notebook (1920–1925), Charlot made two lists of his artworks for 1923 and one for 1924:

Ses Œuvres de 1923

Année 1923

fini fresque jusqu'à 1—2—23

panneaux Ministère : 3

dessins : série mexique : 10_

au trait petits : 100

aquarelle : banane, S^{te} Maria, 2 papeleros, mère

projets : 2 géométrique

gravures : petits personnages : 5 ou 6

portraits (dessin) :

Ses Œuvres de 1923

1923

dessins :

portraits :	Vargas	Nah
	Rea	ui
	aide	inge
	Guerrero	nier
		o
		Ma
	Arzubide.	nga
	“	na.
		Am
		ado
	de	
Cano.	la	
	Cue	
	va	
	Car	
Sch.	men	
	Mar	
	in	

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	Pintao.	
	Orozco.	13
mexicains :		
genre litho :		10
mon groupe		3
au trait		3
C. E. (bons)		6
nus		8
projets géom		2
croquis petits		100
aquarelles		
petites		3
	2 typ	
grde :	mex :	
	mère—	
	bananes	
	1	
	caricature.	
	2	
	papeleros.	5
	-	
gravures :		
bois		6
litho		8
peinture :		
fini fresque		
3 panneaux ministère		
1 écusson		

—
 —
 —
 16
 7

Ses Œuvres de 1924

1924

dessins

tableaux

petits 54.

mur :

1 écusson aigle et serpent (Preparatoria)

1 écusson (pan-américaine.)

2 panneaux longs et arcs (Prep.)

His Works of 1923

Year 1923

finished fresco up to February 1, 1923

Ministry panels: 3

drawings: Mexico series: 10

line drawings, small: 100

watercolor: banana, Santa Maria, 2 newsboys, mother

preparatory drawings: 2 geometric

prints: small personages: 5 or 6

portraits (drawing)

His Works of 1923

1923

drawings:

portraits:	Vargas Rea	Nahui
	Guerrero's assistant	engineer
	Arzubide	Mangana.
	“	
	Cano.	Amado de la Cueva
	Sch[ultess].	Carmen Marin
	Pintao	
	Orozco.	13
Mexicans:		
genre scenes lithograph		10
my group		3
line drawing		3
C. E. (good ones)		6
nudes		8
geometric preparatory drawings		2
small sketches		100
watercolors		
small		3
big	2 Mexican types: mother bananas 1 caricature 2 newsboys.	5
prints:		
woodcuts		6
lithographs		8
painting:		
finished fresco		
3 Ministry panels		
1 shield		

His Works of 1924

1924

drawings

paintings

small

54.

wall:

1 shield with eagle and serpent (Preparatoria)

1 shield (Panamerican [Library])

2 long panels and arches (Preparatoria)

Instructive as they are, Charlot's lists are not complete, as can be seen from a comparison with mentions of aquarelles in the diaries. In his 1922 list, quoted in the previous chapter, he lists two preparatory aquarelles and a third one of Luz. However, another, unidentified aquarelle is listed in his diary of November 11, 1922. He lists none for 1924, although his diary records them as a frequently used medium.⁷⁵ Charlot continued to paint aquarelles prolifically in 1925.⁷⁶ Returning from a four-day trip to Amecameca, Charlot entered in his diary "je reviens avec 16 aquarelles pour l'exposition" 'I return with sixteen aquarelles for the exhibition' (April 21, 1925). Similarly, Charlot recorded only his formally finished drawings, not his many quick sketches or preparatory work. After a two-day trip, he recorded "rentre avec 22 dessins au trait" 'return with twenty-two line drawings' (September 23, 1925). He could also make choices for inclusion based on quality, for instance, listing only the 1923 C. E. drawings he described as "(bon)" 'good.' A suggestion of his production is found in his entry of June 9, 1925, after a six-day trip to Cuernavaca: "retour avec 97 dessins et 12 aquarelles" 'return with ninety-seven drawings and twelve aquarelles.' This productivity extended to painting. After the July 1624, 1925, trip to Cuernavaca, he returned with ten small oils, "Landscapes from nature," only five of which are listed in his Checklist (numbers 98 to 102). Problems of the Checklist will be discussed below.

8.2.1. FRESCOES 1923–1924

As seen above, Charlot was so busy with fresco in 1923 that he painted no oils, although he continued his work in drawing and printmaking. After the fresco surface of the *Massacre* dried, he painted in encaustic the vermillion of the lances and dismantled the scaffold. His official finish date was February 1, 1923. On February 1, 1923, the *Massacre* was inaugurated "avec beaucoup d'amis" 'with many friends' (Diary), indeed "a roll call of Mexican painters."⁷⁷ A photograph reveals Abraham Ángel, Roberto Montenegro, Adolfo Best Maugard, José Clemente Orozco, Ignacio Asúnsolo, Amado de la Cueva, Carlos Mérida, David Alfaro Siqueiros, Germán Cueto, and Emilio Amero. Notably absent were

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Fernando Leal and Diego Rivera. The *Massacre* was received well by most of the muralists and was for a time the most visible mural of the new phase of the movement, because *Creation* was in the closed amphitheater. Charlot and Rivera became linked in the public mind (*MMR* 187 f.).

On February 18, 1923—while Rivera was finishing *Creation*, to be inaugurated on March 9, 1923—Charlot and two other members of Rivera’s team, Guerrero and Amado de la Cueva, moved to the Ministry of Education to prepare for Rivera’s arrival on March 23 to begin work in the first court. They would also prepare for their own murals in the second court. As I have discussed above (Chapter 4, Section 2.5.2 The National or Communal Style), they based their plan on their experience in the Preparatoria. A compatible team, they agreed on a common medium (fresco without the addition of other media like encaustic or embedded objects), scale, subject matter (types of labor and *fiestas*; with the concurrence of Vasconcelos), and placement. Charlot wrote happily to Walter Pach:

Nous venons, au Syndicat, de faire une fête pour l’achèvement de l’amphithéâtre. Vasconcelos était présent. En même temps la décoration du ministère à fresque continue. Diego a terminé son premier panneau. La seconde cour sera peinte par de la Cueva, Guerrero et moi. Le tout doit être terminé dans l’année, pour votre retour, espérons-le. (March 31, 1923)

‘We have just had a celebration at the Sindicato for the completion of the amphitheater. Vasconcelos was there. At the same time, the fresco decoration of the ministry continues. Diego has finished his first panel. The second court will be painted by de la Cueva, Guerrero, and me. The whole should be finished within the year, for your return, let us hope.’

These hopes were destroyed in two and a half months of intrigue and obstruction that the trusting young artists were unequipped to oppose.⁷⁸ The result was the team’s expulsion from the second court and the destruction of all of Guerrero’s work and of one panel of Charlot’s.⁷⁹ His surviving panels, discussed below, and de la Cueva’s *Los Santiagos*, *Santiago Dance*, and *El Torito*, *The Bluebottle*—painted approximately from July to September 1923—show both artists at a height of their youthful enthusiasm and inspiration. That they were prevented from completing their program is tragic. With the frictions of work and the ultimate collapse of his hopes, Charlot suffered frequently from depression, which he notes in his diary.⁸⁰ He characteristically incorporated his pain into his religious life: “triste offert à Vierge Guadalupe” ‘sad, offered to the Virgin of Guadalupe’ (Diary December 12, 1923).

Although the three young artists completed their own murals, their main occupation was assisting Rivera.⁸¹ Charlot’s first duty was working with Rivera on the technique of fresco, as he wrote to Pach, probably in mid-March 1923:

Le travail au ministère est commencé. Diego va travailler à fresque et je l’aide.
900m² Ça promet d’être intéressant. Je vous tiendrai au courant. (no date. early 1923 ?)

‘The work has started at the ministry. Diego is going to work in fresco, and I’ll assist

him.

900 square meters. That promises to be interesting. I'll keep you informed.'

Charlot always emphasized the importance of the mason:

Because Luis Escobar was now his mason and I was Diego's helper, these first two panels were executed according to the same procedures that I had used in my Preparatoria fresco. (*MMR* 257)

Despite technical and psychological difficulties, Rivera became a master of the medium in his great murals in the first court (*MMR* 257-260). Charlot also aided Amado de la Cueva: "aidé Amado qui commence" 'assisted Amado, who is beginning' (Diary July 20, 1923). Charlot and the two other young muralists continued to spend much of their time assisting Rivera, especially Guerrero, who "was denied time to work on his own murals" (*MMR* 274). Vasconcelos seems to have accorded some responsibility to Charlot:

vu Vasconcelos qui demande pourquoi Diego pas rentré. (Diary April 8, 1923)

rentrée Diego. recommencé à peindre. (Diary April 9, 1923)

'saw Vasconcelos, who asks why Diego has not returned.'

'return of Diego. started again to paint.'

Vasconcelos raised Charlot's pay later in the year (Diary 1923: October 27, 29).

The task of assisting Rivera was aggravated by his overt hostility and campaign to arrogate the entire ministry for himself (*MMR* 273). On May 18, the day before Charlot recorded the beginning of his preparation for *Cargadores*:

Diego m'attrape salement pour m'engager à faire mon panneau. "Que je ne m'occupe pas de l'aider mais de peindre." merci mon Dieu et Sainte Th. (Diary May 18, 1923)

'Diego scolds me nastily for committing myself to doing my panel. "That I don't occupy myself with helping him but with painting." Thank you, God and Saint Th[érèse of Lisieux].'

Charlot's translation: "That I stop helping him and paint my own."

Diego continued hostilities even after he had taken over the second court, depreciating the young muralists work for the historical record.⁸² In 1924, he told Charlot he was planning to destroy his murals and asked whether he would mind. Charlot answered, "Maybe not me, Diego, but think of posterity!" He said Rivera turned green and the plan was dropped (Tabletalk early 1970s?). Charlot continued to assist Rivera and to see him and Lupe socially.⁸³ As seen below, he also continued to write admiringly of his work.

The muralists were also experiencing hostility from the Preparatoria students, who had already been roused, often by their teachers, to oppose Vasconcelos' plans for the institution.⁸⁴ Problems seem to have started with petty inconveniences. On July 11, 1922, Charlot was beaten by five students because "They resented the fact that my scaffold blocked the shortest way downstairs" (*MMR* 182). Through 1923 culminating in 1924, the students protested ever more strongly against the murals that they felt were ugly stains on colonial architecture and proclaimed a revolutionary, socialist message.⁸⁵ They began

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stoning artists and then murals.⁸⁶ Real worry was aroused for the survival of the murals, as Charlot wrote to Pach in early 1923:

Alfaro Siqueiros (était-il là quand vous êtes parti) commence la décoration de l'escalier dans la même école (3 étages : 250m²) il a des projets très intéressants. Quel malheur de penser que tout cela sera détruit par les élèves.

'Alfaro Siqueiros (was he here at the time you left ?) is beginning the decoration of the staircase in the same school (three floors: 250 square meters). He has some very interesting preparatory drawings. How sad to think that all that will be destroyed by the students.'

The artists responded with "nuestros vigorosos brazos de pintores-boxeadores" 'our vigorous arms of painter-boxers' and, in the cases of Siqueiros and Asúnsolo, firearms.⁸⁷

The 1924 student tumult was not only the immediate occasion of stopping of the mural program,⁸⁸ but it exacerbated the tensions among the artists, especially in regard to Rivera. As Emilio Amero wrote:

No todos los miembros del grupo respaldaron a Orozco. (Diego entre otros) Con este incidente, la rivalidad que ya existía entre Orozco y Rivera se manifestó claramente. (1947)

'Not all the members of the group supported Orozco. (Diego among others.) With this incident, the rivalry that already existed between Orozco and Rivera manifested itself clearly.'⁸⁹

Charlot's relations with the students were not always hostile, as seen in a letter to him by the officer of a student organization (translation by Charlot):

seal of the organization

Sr Jean Charlot.

Presente.

Muy Señor Mío:

Tuve el gran honor de recibir el dibujo, que Ud de una manera tan cortés me obsequió y del que doy a Ud las gracias, participándole que le estaré siempre agradecido por tan grande y simpático obsequio, que siempre me recordará la bondad y deferencia que Ud ha tenido conmigo y para con toda la Sociedad de la que yo tengo el placer de ser Presidente.

Tenga Ud presente, que la Sociedad de Alumnos de la Escuela N. Preparatoria siempre tendrá de Ud y de los compañeror [*sic*: compañeros] que han colavorado [*sic*] con Ud en la decoración de ésta Escuela, un buen recuerdo.

Aprovecho la oportunidad para ponerme a sus órdenes.

México 14 de Febrero de 1923.

G. Othón de Campo

Committee of Interscholar exchanges of the Escuela National Preparatoria

Sr. J. Charlot

Dear sir:

I had the honor of receiving the drawing that you gave me with much courtesy and for which I thank you. I will always be grateful for such [a] great and sympathetic gift, that will always remind me of the goodness and deference you showed towards me and towards the Society of which it is my pleasure to be president.

Rest assured that the Society of Students of the Escuela National Preparatoria will always keep of you, and of the companions that have collaborated with you in the decoration of this school, a kind remembrance.

I take this opportunity to assure you that I am always at your service.

Mex. 14 February 1923

G. Othon de Campo⁹⁰

When Charlot returned to Mexico for his retrospective in 1968, he was feted at a reunion of the alumni:

déjeunée Preparatorianos 1920–24 w les Martínez del Campo. tecojotes etc...
speeches. aussi moi. give me button of club as member. (Diary April 18, 1968)

‘lunch of the Preparatoria students of 1920–1924 with the Martínez del Campo.
tecojotes [Crataegus mexicana], etc...speeches. and me too. give me button of club
as member.’

Besides the students and many of their teachers, much of the local intelligentsia, bourgeoisie, and officialdom was hostile to the muralists:

The stupefaction of students, parents, and teachers...was matched by that of local art critics. Pérez Mendoza remarks in February 1923:

One should point to the lack of sense that presides over the decoration of the National Preparatoria School, for which no plan was evolved, no total scheme that could impart unity and harmony to the whole; with the most appalling irresponsibility, those walls have been painted as if they were samplers of divergent styles of decoration. (Writings Related to *MMR*: Passages Cut 118/192)

Criticisms ran the gamut: the muralists were enriching themselves at the state’s expense, they were promoting a Callista socialism, they were disrespectful of established local artists, they did not follow civilized European models, their art was too difficult to understand, their art was too academic and old-

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fashioned.⁹¹ The writer Salvador Novo distinguished himself both as a promoter of Rivera and a demoter of the mural movement itself.⁹² Renato Molina Enriquez, another promoter of Rivera, made a particular target of Charlot (1923). Finally, most people found their art *fea* ‘ugly.’ Charlot felt their Post-Impressionist, Cubistic style was the main obstacle for most viewers (*MMR* 261 f., 264 ff.). He said in a later interview:

“And I couldn’t understand why the people stoned the paintings and wanted to tar and feather me,” he chuckled. “But I saw those paintings on a recent trip, and now I know.” (Holman 1948)

Charlot’s violent image was not entirely jocular. Mexico in the 1920s suffered violence from the casual to the revolutionary, from shooting light bulbs to insurrection. Charlot recalled how the senator Manuel Hernández Galván, “a dear friend” (*MMR* 106), would go up to a personal enemy in a restaurant and terrorize him with real threats. The senator himself was shot in a restaurant, turning towards the door and reaching for his pistol. Charlot said his corpse had the same aiming expression seen in the 1924 portrait by Edward Weston.⁹³ The famously honest and independent senator, Francisco Field Jurado, was assassinated in a city street on January 23, 1924. Backed by United States businessmen, Adolfo de la Huerta revolted in December 1923.⁹⁴ In the few months he prevailed, he managed to kill the great, reforming governor of Yucatán, Felipe Carillo Puerto.⁹⁵ On December 12, 1923, Charlot was asked “to give an artillery course to new federal recruits. On December 15 I made ready to join the Obregón forces” (*MMR* 105 f.). War fever seized the art group: “grande réunion communiste pour départ à la révolution [*sic*]” ‘big communist meeting for departure to the revolution’ (Diary December 12, 1923); “Diego et Carmen me propose tous avec Lucy á la révolution” ‘Diego and Carmen propose to me that we all go with Lucy to the revolution..’⁹⁶ Charlot reflected, “It was perhaps the extreme martial quality of the moment that lent an air of futility to art activities” (*MMR* 106). In sum, the early mural work was done in “un ambiente de apasionamiento y de violencia, caldeado por el escándalo de la prensa” ‘an atmosphere of passion and violence, heated by the scandal of the press’ (Leal 1990: 92). As Charlot often said, the muralists did not enjoy the atmosphere of a Paris atelier.

8.2.1.1. DATING

Charlot wrote about his three frescoes in the second court of the Ministry of Education, but he left unmentioned several others, stating that “‘Lavanderas’ was the last fresco that I painted in Mexico,” when in fact he finished several after that (*MMR* 273, 277). I will use his diary to correct one statement and to date and identify, where possible, those frescoes.

Charlot did the planning for his first Ministry mural, *Cargadores*, on May 19–27, 1923. The initial execution lasted from May 29 to June 12, done in eleven sections. He therefore made a mistake when he wrote that the mural was finished on May 31 (*MMR* 273). On June 16, while he was planning his second fresco, he returned to *Cargadores* and repainted a section: “Repeins un morceau de la fresque. 1” ‘Repaint piece of fresco 1.’ He finished doing this on June 18.

CARGADORES (16–1/3' X 7–2/3')

planning: May 19–27, 1923
 execution: May 29–June 12/18, in 11 sections
 June 16: reworked one section
 June 18: finished mural definitively.

Charlot had “Castillo comme aide” ‘Castillo as assistant’ (Diary May 21, 29, 1923).

The planning for the second mural, *Listones*, was done on June 14–15, 19–22, 1923, and the execution from June 25 to July 19, in nineteen sections.

DANZA DE LOS LISTONES (16–1/3' X 7–2/3')

planning: June 14–15, 19–22, 1923
 execution: June 25–July 19, in nineteen sections

The third fresco, *Lavanderas*, went more quickly. Planning July 21–22, 1923, and execution July 23–August 2, in seven sections (implied).

LAVANDERAS (16–1/3' X 7–2/3')

planning: July 21–22, 1923
 execution: July 23–August 2, in 7 sections (implied)
 August 3, cut edges and removed scaffold.

Charlot and Amado de la Cueva were then ousted from the second court. Charlot started assisting Siqueiros in the *escalera chica* of the Preparatoria, “meanwhile looking for some work to do on my own” (*MMR* 273). On September 11, 1923, Charlot found an appropriate wall in San Pedro y San Pablo, but the next day “Vasconcelos me refuse le mur et me met à peindre un écusson” “Vasconcelos refuses me the wall and puts me to work painting a coat of arms” (Diary; *MMR* 273).

This was the *Shield of the National University of Mexico, with Eagle and Condor* (fresco, 4 ½ × 5 ¼ ft.), over the door adjacent to the *Massacre* in the Preparatoria. Planning was done September 13–14, with Charlot drawing a condor and an eagle at the zoo. Charlot worked on the execution September 15, 17–19, 25. But on September 17, Vasconcelos ordered him to a new task: “Vasconcelos ordonne de suspendre tout travail pour peindre écussons au ministère” “Vasconcelos orders [me] to suspend all work to paint shields at the Ministry.” These were small panels on the second floor of the second court to be decorated with the shields of the states of Mexico. On September 25, after working on the Preparatoria shield, Charlot started on the smaller Ministry shields and finished nine by November 1. After finishing the ninth Ministry shield, Charlot returned to the Preparatoria and finished the *Eagle and Condor*: “fini écusson Preparatoria. très bien” ‘finished Preparatoria shield. very good.’ This fresco is the “1 écusson” ‘one shield’ noted in “Ses œuvres de 1923” in his Ludwigshafen Notebook. The nine Ministry shields are not mentioned.

**SHIELD OF THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MEXICO, WITH
 EAGLE AND CONDOR** (4 ½ × 5 ¼ ft.)

Preparatoria

preparation: September 13–14

execution: September 15, 17–19, 25, November 1.

The shields in the Ministry of Education seem to have been largely forgotten (*MMR* 273, 276). Charlot himself did not list them in “Ses œuvres de 1923” of the Ludwigshafen Notebook. When Pablo O’Higgins was asked about them, he replied:

Jean did one, I think. They’re all done by different artists. Maybe Jean did one, you know. Maybe he did more than one. I don’t know. Because those were not given great attention. They were sort of to fill up...or to start knowing what fresco is. Things like that. But... They’re interesting, and I should criticize...or tell that they’re not worthwhile, but they’re not as important. And there were many painters in those small ones. [*inaudible*] They’re symbols, seals. (O’Higgins March 21, 1974)

Schmeckebeier lists Charlot, Mérida, Guerrero, and Amado de la Cueva as painters of the shields (1939: 125). Emilio Amero wrote that he painted six of them.⁹⁷

Charlot listed the Ministry shields in a list of his works: “Nine shields. Second Court, second floor, Secretaria de Educación, Mexico D. F., September—October, 1923.” He also dated his work in his diary:

SHIELD I

preparation and execution: September 25, 27–28

SHIELD II

preparation: September 29

execution: October 1–3

SHIELD III

preparation: October 4 (drawing)

execution: October 5–6

SHIELD IV

HIDALGO

finish execution: October 9

SHIELD V

SAN LUIS POTOSÍ

execution: October 11–12

SHIELD VI

execution: probably October 15–16

SHIELD VII

execution: probably October 19–20

SHIELD VIII

preparation: October 22

execution: October 26–27

SHIELD IX

GUERRERO

execution: October 30–November 1⁹⁸

Charlot identifies only three shields: *Hidalgo*, *San Luis Potosí*, and *Guerrero*. His diary entry of October 22, if correctly decoded, reads: “peins sol en face” ‘paint facing sun,’ which might refer to the shield of Tamaulipas, which has the same pits as *Hidalgo* and *San Luis Potosí*. Five or six of his shields remain to be identified, a difficult task, since Charlot was painting a set image accommodated to a traditional style. Arguments are thus inconclusive. Moreover, Charlot may have helped Amado de la Cueva on one or more panels, since Amado was apparently experiencing difficulties, finally completing only two shields.⁹⁹

A practical argument is the appearance of two shields on a single surface. With his mason, a single artist could have finished the surface more expeditiously than two artists working side-by-side. Charlot’s *Guerrero* is on the right of *Michoacán*. The two have slightly different background colors, but the crowns are similar and are tilted to create a torsion: *Michoacán* up and *Guerrero* down. One crown is gold and the other silver, the same contrast as in *San Luis Potosí*. Moreover, the single Aztec warrior seems to aim his spear at the three unidentified Spanish kings, reduced in size to fit into the shield—a giant against pigmies. If Charlot did not paint *Michoacán*, he accommodated his design to it. In 1924, as discussed below, Charlot painted a cartouche next to *Baja California*. The above argument can be used, I argue, to exclude some shields: the pair Querétaro and Morelos and the trio Sinaloa, Sonora, and Nayarit.

Charlot’s three identified shields—and *Tamaulipas*—are all unusually three-dimensional for shields, especially in the Ministry of Education series. (Indeed, Amado de la Cueva was between his Ministry of Education style and the flat, hieratic one he used at the University of Guadalajara.)¹⁰⁰ Aside from the above, the two most three-dimensional shields are those of Aguascalientes and Tlaxcala (and perhaps Tabasco). A second argument for Charlot’s authorship is that the point of view in both is from top down, like *Hidalgo*, a consequence of the three-dimensionality. Finally, both use tipping to create torsion, as in the pair *Michoacán* up and *Guerrero* down. Both are good paintings. *Tlaxcala* sports a grand banner and creates a correspondence between the crowns and the battlements. *Guanajuato* is close to *San Juan Potosí*, for instance, using the scrollwork at the bottom to echo the feet. The figure is touching as well. *Zacatecas* appears by a different hand to me. Charlot mentions Sinaloa in his diary of June 9, 1924, but the reference to the shield is unsure and the Sinaloa shield is unlike his others.

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The diary reveals that on February 14, 1924, Charlot was recalled to the Ministry to paint three more shields: “ministère pour 3 écussons” ‘Ministry for three shields.’ His diary entries are less precise than the above, but he started preparations on February 15, discussing the tasks with the mason on the 18th, and perhaps copying an illustration to use on the 19th.

SHIELD 1

February 20–21.

SHIELD 2

Shield of the National University of Mexico, with Eagle and Condor, Biblioteca Iberoamericana or Panamericana.

February 22–23?

SHIELD 3

February 25–26.

The second of these was the larger version of the fresco on the same subject in the Preparatoria, *Shield of the National University of Mexico, with Eagle and Condor*, above a large window in the Biblioteca Iberoamericana or Panamericana, which Charlot dated February 1924 in a works list and in “Ses Œuvres de 1924” in the Ludwigshafen Notebook (Edwards 1966: 193). In his diary for February 23, he notes “écusson Mexique,” arguably short for the *Shield of the National University of Mexico, with Eagle and Condor*.¹⁰¹

Charlot calls the third shield the “écusson espagnol” ‘Spanish shield’ (Diary February 25). In all likelihood, this refers to the cartouche with an inscription in Spanish that accompanies the series of second floor shields. It resembles the cartouche Charlot used in his *Massacre in the Main Temple*. Moreover, he had among his papers photographs only of the shield of San Luis Potosí and the cartouche. The first shield is described in the diary as “escultura” (Spanish) or ‘sculpture’ (French). This fits the shell-like molding of the Baja California shield contiguous or paired with the cartouche. Two of the above arguments can be made for attributing the Baja California shield to Charlot: the shield is in the three-dimensional style of Charlot’s other shields, and the assignment to a single artist of a large surface to be painted as two panels is technically practical.

Charlot apparently maintained an interest in shields. While in Guadalajara on September 22, 1924, he studied the “escudo du libraire” ‘shield of the bookstore/library.’¹⁰²

After working in the ministry, Charlot moved back to the wall by his *Massacre* in the Preparatoria to paint *Eagle and Serpent, Mexico’s National Emblem* on the opposite, thus balancing, panel of his *Eagle and Condor*. This work is found in his works lists and in his “Ses Œuvres de 1924” in the Ludwigshafen Notebook: “1 écusson aigle et serpent (Preparatoria)” ‘one shield eagle and serpent (Preparatoria). Charlot again went to the zoo to draw a serpent (Diary February 27).

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EAGLE AND SERPENT, MEXICO'S NATIONAL EMBLEM (4 ½ × 5 ¼ ft.)

Preparatoria.

preparation: February 27, 1924

execution: February 29–March 1.

Finally, Charlot frescoed the two long, narrow panels, one to the left of *Eagle and Condor* and the other to the right of *Eagle and Serpent*, respectively *Cuautemoc* and *St. Christopher*. No commission is mentioned in the diaries, and Charlot may have painted the panels simply because he had a mason and the opportunity. Charlot started both murals on consecutive days, then finished the *St. Christopher* and “recommencé” ‘restarted’ the *Cuautemoc*.

ST. CHRISTOPHER (12 ¾ X 2 ¾ ft.)

Preparatoria

preparation: March 13, 1924

execution: March 13, 15, 17–18, in four sessions (March 16 was Sunday).

CUAUTHEMOC (12 ¾ X 2 ¾ ft.)

Preparatoria

execution: March 14, 29 (recommencé), April 1–3, in five sessions.

Charlot mentions in his diary for March 22, 1924, that he produced one more, probably decorative work: “peins entre les arcs de Prepar” ‘paint between the arches of the Preparatoria.’¹⁰³ These frescoes have not been identified.

8.2.1.2. CARGADORES, LAVANDERAS, AND LISTONES

Charlot’s three frescoes in the second court of the Ministry of Education have been generally admired.¹⁰⁴ Along with those of Amado de la Cueva, they were a perfection of the National Style that had been pioneered by the young muralists in the Preparatoria and most fully realized by Leal. As such, they are an example of the group spirit that the muralists shared “not unlike mediums.”¹⁰⁵ Amado de la Cueva had arrived too late in September 1922 to participate in the Preparatoria work, so his two frescoes in the Ministry of Education are the first he created. But Charlot’s Ministry frescoes can be compared to his *Massacre* to describe his development.

First, the chosen and assigned subjects—“daily labor and popular fiestas” (Paz 1993: 135)—were contemporary rather than historical and innovative in their monumental treatment of subjects usually treated in small-format genre scenes. They shared the purpose of one of their few predecessors—Courbet in his *The Stone Breakers* (1849)—of according their new subjects the respect and honor they deserved.¹⁰⁶ Charlot’s planned French mural, *Processional*, had already included ordinary people in modern dress, revealing an early concern with developing contemporary subjects for monumental works. Consequently, Charlot abandoned unrealistic clothing, like the Indian costumes based on Colonial art.

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As discussed above, Charlot absorbed his symbolism into his total image rather than using overt symbols or symbolic figures as he had in *Massacre* (Chapter 6) and his earlier *L'Amitié*. Thus in his street sketches of *cargadores*, their labor and exploitation are expressed by their bent, straining bodies themselves. In the mural *Cargadores*, that meaning is expanded by the context of climbing a steep hill towards some infernal edifice.

Similarly, Charlot learned to absorb his geometric composition more unobtrusively into his image. Painting *Massacre*, “my spirit was prone to wander and to whisper how such and such hard-won effects were as dazzling as Picasso’s” (*MMR* 184 f.; Chapter 6). That is, Charlot wanted to display his Cubism. The negative reaction of his mason, Escobar, taught Charlot that:

I could not flaunt art in the face of my Indian friends, because it would be wrong, it would be prideful, and it would end by alienating them. So I had to learn as I said. I had to be born anew. (March 8, 1972; Chapter 6)

To serve the public purpose of a mural, Charlot had to move from his analytical period to his synthesizing, in which the same compositional devices would add to the effect of the image without calling attention to themselves. As Flores writes, “Rivera and Charlot significantly altered the style and content of their first murals to transmit a more direct and legible social message” (2013: 118). The overt line of Charlot’s work can be traced from *L'Amitié* through his 1922 oils to the *Massacre*. For the Ministry frescoes, he reached back to the synthesis of *Processional*. The same movement can be seen in comparing his 1922 to his 1924 oils, when he took up the medium again after working in the Ministry. Brenner compared Charlot’s Ministry frescoes to Rivera’s:

but the arrangement is more formal, the rhythms simpler and evident, and the more angular geometry implies the young man who taught mathematics to artillery officers in training. (*Idols* 309)

Nonetheless—and notwithstanding the regular shapes of the Ministry panels as opposed to *Massacre*—Charlot’s compositions are extremely complex. My analyses will not be exhaustive. Their main deficiency results from my incapacity for mathematics, which Charlot used extensively as seen in the numerical notations on geometric figures in preparatory sketches for *Massacre* and *Listones*. Mathematical relations like the Golden Section merit the attention of a numerate art historian. Also, my use of the word *realistic* is always relative.

Finally, Charlot abandoned mixed media (the encaustic on the spears), embedding objects in the mortar, and modifying the flat mortar surface by scratching and other means, with the exception of incised lines.

Nonetheless, the connections between *Massacre* and the Ministry frescoes should be recognized. All are composed in the classical way from earlier sketches, like Charlot’s *Sunny Sous-Bois* (before 1917; Volume 1, Chapter 5). *Cargadores* explores the same composition of instability as *Massacre* expressed in part by the accumulation of black at the top, as discussed below. Schmeckeberier finds that *The Dance of the Ribbons* is “built on the same principle of the rotation of stylized figures about a central point that he

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had used in the Preparatoria mural” (1939: 46). Both *Massacre* and *Lavanderas* use masks as bases for faces, although those of *Lavanderas* are more absorbed (Flores 2013: 121). The one face visible in *Cargadores* echoes the agony of the Indian faces in *Massacre*: the modern exploitation of Indians is as evil as their conquest.

Connections can also be made between the two frescoes and the 1922 drawings and oils. I have discussed above Charlot’s use of his street sketches for both frescoes (Chapter 7, Section 1.2.1.2). Also, in both frescoes as in the 1922 oils *Woman with Jug* and *Indian Woman with Orange*, the backgrounds to the large foreground figures consist of uphill paths (compare Schmeckebeier 1939: 47).

The subjects of *Cargadores* and *Lavanderas* are, respectively, male and female. The viewer can hardly avoid associating the panels with that basic pair of mental organization and culture: they “divide the genders through their labors.”¹⁰⁷ That Charlot is using them programmatically is clear firstly from their placement. The north wall of the second court of the Ministry is divided into nine panels. Rivera reserved for himself the two exterior panels, which were wider than the others. This left Charlot and Amado de la Cueva with seven panels. *Cargadores* occupies the extreme eastern panel, and *Lavanderas* the extreme western. These are the first panels that are easily visible behind the arches in front of them. They are thus on corresponding walls and frame the series of seven, which Charlot expresses in their compositions. Both frescoes are organized in three spaces: foreground, middle ground, and background, separated by wall, path, or ridge line like stage flats. Both have strong diagonals rising inwards, suggesting a pyramidal or dome form above the whole north wall (compare Schmeckebeier 1939: 47). Also, the foreground figures of each panel are grouped on the interior side of the panel. The *Cargadores* are moving up towards the interior and the *Lavanderas* are moving down from the interior (the down-up contrast was used by Leal and Charlot to coordinate their Preparatoria panels). Both panels have black upper sections. The central rectangular box in *Cargadores* corresponds to the large laundry bundle in *Lavanderas*. Finally, the rising background figures follow the same angles, and the *Cargadores* mountain path between two drops resembles the narrower angled wall of *Lavanderas*.

The two panels are, therefore, intended to be considered together under the rubric of male and female. Both genders are depicted at work and, more particularly, carrying burdens. But the effect of each image is radically different: the women are orderly and stable, but the men are suffering a chaotic collapse. As Schmeckebeier described:

The figures in The Washerwomen are molded into a strictly mathematical framework, dominated by the static vertical forms whose placement and recession create a diagonal pattern. In The Pack Carriers, however, these are not stiff figures, but powerful struggling movements organized into a predominantly opposing diagonal to complement that of The Washerwomen. Straining figures and Cubistic blocks and spheres topple to left and right... (1929: 47)

The instability that Charlot experienced in World War I and depicted in *Massacre* is extended to post-Conquest Indian males, peonized in foreign enterprises. Charlot’s description of the *Massacre* in his “Réponse à Molina” can be applied to *Cargadores* (Chapter 7). The men are torn away from their families

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and their villages and labor in some enormous work site created by foreigners. The women carry on their traditional village duties in a family setting represented by a little girl, who learns her tasks by watching and will carry them on in her turn. Based on his experience of villages like Milpa Alta, Charlot is depicting Indians in their situation of alien cultural pressure. The men's traditional roles have been largely destroyed by the imposition of a foreign government, and they are pressed into alien tasks.¹⁰⁸ But women continue their traditional activities in the family and villages, maintaining and transmitting the culture, as Charlot experienced in Milpa Alta. A similar contrast can be seen in Charlot's 1944 fresco *Cortez Lands in Mexico*: the Indian men are absorbed in the historical event while most of the women and children continue their normal activities. An early source for Charlot may have been his favorite Náhuatl poem, *The Last Prayer of a Dying Son to his Mother*, in which a warrior asks his mother to bury him under the kitchen floor and weep for him when she makes tortillas (1949/1979). An expressive detail can be found in Charlot's two uses of a mesa-like formation that he sketched (US 5; Chapter 7, Section 1.2.1.2). In *Cargadores*, he transformed the steep mesa into a threatening man-made building, but in *Lavanderas*, he depicted a side of the mesa as a natural formation.

As seen above, burden bearers were a minor subject of Charlot's art in France, and he was aware of the French tradition of depicting workers, including, for instance, the two famous burden-bearers on the Portal of the Coronation of the Virgin of Notre-Dame de Paris.¹⁰⁹ In Mexico, *cargadores*, a common sight even today, became a major subject for him based both on his street observations and also on their long establishment as a subject in genre painting and photography. Charlot always hardened the usual genre picturesqueness, found even in Rivera's idyllic depiction of tropical workers in the Ministry stairway: "the underlying class criticism is more direct"; "exposes social inequalities as a means of effecting change" (Flores 2013: 121). The wide applicability of the message is seen in the lack of localization of the image: it applies generally to Mexican workers.¹¹⁰ The *cargadores* toil upwards towards a massive, intimidating, fortified construction of foreign design, a "prison-like building" (Flores 2013: 121). Like the thirteenth-century armor in *Massacre*, Charlot alludes to Medieval European fortresses with their feudal connotations and the added point of their being imported and imposed on American soil. The implied profit motive of the *cargadores*' exploitation can remind the viewer also of William Blake's "dark Satanic mills." Charlot will use huge buildings to express the same negative view of modernization and industrialization in his illustrations for Maples Arce's *URBE* (1924), discussed below, revealing a major difference from the positive Futurist and Estridentista view (compare Rashkin 2009: 27). Charlot had enunciated his view in his "Réponse à Molina" about *Massacre*:

J'ai été frappé, à mon arrivée à Mexico, du contraste entre la *spiritualité* de la race indienne et la *civilisation mécanique* venue d'Europe d'abord, des États-Unis maintenant...ce conflit plus général qui existe entre la recherche *du Beau et du bien* d'un côté, et celle de *l'argent et du jouir*.

'On my arrival in Mexico, I was struck by the contrast between the *spirituality* of the Indian race and the *mechanical civilization* come first from Europe and now from the United States...this more general conflict that exists between the search for the *Beautiful and the Good* on one hand and that of *money and pleasure*. (April 1923)

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Cargadores is related to *Massacre* in its composition as well as its message: they both use geometry paradoxically to express disorder and instability. The composition of *Cargadores* is as complex as that of *Massacre* although less overt, a model of how geometric composition can be expressive without becoming the center of attention. The composition consists of several systems of lines that compare and contrast to each other and also overlap to express the strain of carrying heavy weights steeply upwards against an overpowering gravity.

The panel is first divided by two diagonals that intersect at the right edge of the yellow rectangular box just under the right wrist of the *cargador* carrying it. They thus form two pyramids, the lower one pointing up and the upper one pointing down. The lower pyramid expresses the effort of the *cargadores* straining upwards, and the yellow box has been pushed precariously above it, forming a smaller, tilted pyramid of its own. The upper, inverted pyramid expresses the force of gravity pushing downwards against the effort of the *cargadores*. This force can be seen in a discrepancy in the two diagonals. Charlot anchors one diagonal to the external architecture that frames the panel to suggest that it is in its original position: it rises from the top of the capital of a pilaster or pier of the door frame to the right of the fresco and rises to the top corner of the rectangular door frame on the left. In contrast, the other diagonal has been pushed down so that it touches the door frame on the right below the top corner. As a result, the web shape between the two diagonals on the left is wider than the one on the right, which has been squeezed by the downward pressure of gravity. As in his 1922 woodcuts, Charlot is using the background to clarify the situation of the figures (Chapter 7 Section 1.2.3).

The two surviving preparatory sketches of *Cargadores* confirm Charlot's compositional use of diagonals: they are drawn with a slightly darker pencil. Moreover, one of the sketches is of the group of men alone, revealing the care used in their organization or disorganization. The *cargadores* are arranged in three sub-groups from the bottom to the upper middle of the panel. At the bottom foreground of the group, two *cargadores* have fallen to the ground. Above them in the middle ground, two strain upwards with their burdens attached to their back by head straps. At the top, in a third interior ground of the group, a single *cargador* is tilting backwards under the weight of his box.

The normal, expected movement is that of the middle *cargadores*: they are climbing the hill. However, the diagonal they form—rising from right to left—can be followed down to the bottom right corner of the panel. There a spherical package suggests the precariousness of their footing; they are like someone balancing on a ball. The impression is strengthened by the loose coils of rope on the ground in the middle. (The above diagonal is answered by a smaller, lower one rising through the bottom right figure.)

This theme is developed through the whole group. The diagonal of the middle sub-group rises left from bottom right. The diagonals of the bottom sub-group, emphasized by their staffs, rise in the opposite direction. That is, the men have fallen backwards. Beyond this group of *cargadores*, in the middle distance of the whole mural, at the left edge of the panel, a small figure has fallen flat on the ground with his staff beside him. He and his staff represent the next stage in the collapse of the lowest foreground figures: flat on the sloping ground. That the *cargadores* have fallen—rather than halting for a

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rest—is shown by the pained expression of the right figure, the jumble of packages, and the slackened but still attached carrying rope. The alternation of their feet and confusion of their legs suggests that they have tripped over each other.

The bottom and middle diagonals form a zigzag from bottom left to right and then from right to left. Charlot's interest in this type of composition was seen already in his 1922 oil *Old Woman, Santa Anita (La Gata)* (Chapter 7). Charlot now adds a third set of diagonals in the box held by the top figure, rising from bottom left to right. This top and the middle diagonals correspond to those of the mountain path in the background. The bottom diagonals suggest the lowest level of the path outside the picture frame. Charlot is using several means to clarify the meaning of the diagonals.

In the top figure and his box, Charlot uses a new device: an emphasis on the third dimension. In most of the panel, he deemphasizes that dimension in favor of the more two-dimensional lines of a surface composition. As a result, the contrast is striking. For instance, the body of the top figure has more modeling lines than those of the four other *cargadores*. The other strongly three-dimensional object is the spherical bundle in the bottom right corner. That bundle forms the foundation of the diagonal that climaxes in the box, as seen above, and the box suffers from its unsteadiness.

Three-dimensionality is essential for the expression of the action Charlot is narrating: the top *cargador* is tilting dangerously backwards from his feet hidden behind the middle figures. He is about to topple backwards between the middle men and land on the pile of fallen men at the bottom. In the middle, the *cargadores* are pulling away from each other with their burdens, leaving a gap through which the top *cargador* can fall backwards towards the picture plane and the viewer. This closeness is highlighted by the yellow color, which brings the box forwards. Attention is drawn to the box by the two background diagonals that touch it at their intersection. The box seems targeted by the upper inverted pyramid that presses down on it with its concentrated force. The box, a focal point of the whole mural, demonstrates how expressive a three-dimensional geometric shape can be made through point of view. Rivera would play with variations of it in his *El Tianguis* in the three central panels of the north wall.

The *cargador* is losing his struggle for balance against the weight of the box. His arms follow the right-to-left rise of the middle *cargadores*, but the box is on a different set of diagonals. The man steadies himself against a left-to-right downward pressure, but the package is pressing right-to-left, causing the man's left shoulder to sink. A final effect of the three-dimensionality is that the figure and the box represent an angle in space that has been rotated, as it were, from a surface profile towards the picture plane. There are many surface angles in the panel, but this is the only three-dimensional one. The use of three dimensions enables Charlot to express the above point, which he could not do with a two-dimensional representation: *cargador* and box are not meeting on a plane but at a skewed three-dimensional angle that can be seen only because the figure has been rotated.

As with *Massacre*, one of the most sensitive appreciations of the mural was expressed by Alfons Goldschmidt:

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An einer Mauer des Kultusministeriums in Mexiko-Stadt sieht man, wie sie geschleppt haben. Mit den Farben des Mitleidens und der Verklärung hat mein Freund Jean Charlot Körper, Last und Müheweg des Indio an dieser Mauer geschildert. Ein breites Tragband ging um Stirn und Stein. Die Blöcke beugten den Rücken, aber die Stirn blieb immer noch etwas nach oben gerichtet. Die Sehnen gestrafft, der Körper noch federnd unter dem Druck, die Stirn dem Ziel entgegen, so schleppten sie die Quadern, mit denen die Götterhäuser gebaut wurden. Sie schleppen heute noch so... (1927: 113 f.)

‘On a wall of the Ministry of Culture in Mexico City one sees how they are burdened. With the colors of compassion and illumination, my friend, Jean Charlot, has depicted on this wall the bodies, burden, and toilsome path of the Indian. A broad strap goes around the forehead and the rock. The blocks bend the back, but the forehead nonetheless always remains somewhat raised upwards. The sinews tensed, the body still resilient under the strain, the forehead directed towards the goal, so did they bear the squared stones with which their temples were built. They still bear so today...

Charlot, however, made a distinction between Post-Conquest pressed servitude and Indian labor for native purposes. For instance, his later subject of Chich’en Itza pyramid builders is treated positively because the Maya are working on their own buildings.

Lavanderas was Charlot’s third completed panel after *Listones*, discussed below. The work went faster as Charlot had learned from his previous panels (Diary 1923: July 21, August 2). Charlot again monumentalized figures from his street sketches, basing the main figure on DS 124 (compare US 1). *Lavanderas* is, as far as I know, the only mural of the movement to be dedicated entirely to women and their work, a practice Charlot would follow in other media. He wanted to draw attention to those who are usually unseen.

Whereas *Cargadores* is all taut lines and sharp angles, *Lavanderas* is filled with feminine roundness: round bundle and shoulders, circular basket, columnar bodies and arms. At the bottom of the panel is the side of a round pool, and above it, the shoulders of the washerwomen form a corresponding arch that drops down to the little girl on the left. Even the two diagonals rising from left to right—the bottom and top of the lower wall—turn into arches before they touch the edge of the panel. Charlot’s geometric sketch confirms that the diagonals continue behind the backs of the two standing women. The panel’s arches conform to the architectural one in which the panel is painted, expressing the theme that the women and their activity are stably in their proper place. The pool in *Lavanderas* echoes the rollable bundle in the bottom right corner of *Cargadores*, which emphasized instability. Also the two adjacent rope coils form upside down arches, as if fallen. But the pool in *Lavanderas* has been cut horizontally by the edge of the panel so that it forms a solidly planted, stable arch. The pool is further stabilized by a line—drawn in the geometric plan for the mural—that rises from the center of the pool and bisects the main bundle at its center (marking, I believe, the Golden Section). The contrast between *Lavanderas* pool and *Cargadores* bundle is that between stability and instability.

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Charlot regularly created depth in his pictures by rounding his figures. Thus modeling is used extensively in *Lavanderas* whereas it is sparse in *Cargadores*. For instance, the foreground men's almost blank white outfits are distinctly two-dimensional. Charlot is contrasting two methods of composition. In one, like *Cargadores*, the compositional lines are created by the outlines of the objects; for instance, the straight staffs, emphasize the planar design. In the other, as in *Lavanderas*, the main compositional lines pass through the center of the objects, the masses, like the towering central figure. Charlot uses both methods in each panel, but emphasizes first one then the other.

Thematically, the roundness does not convey softness or instability as does the round bundle in the right bottom corner of *Cargadores*. The washing women are planted securely on their haunches and the girl is standing upright. The round pool is cut off at the hard horizontal edge of the panel, unlike the street sketch DS 20. The corresponding laundry bundle does not sag but has also a true horizontal bottom. From the pool through the washing women up through the sturdy body of the central figure to the bundle on her head, a pillar of strength is created and then emphasized by the figure behind her.

Like *Cargadores*, the top section of *Lavanderas* is a threatening black. That the black is not a natural night scene, but symbolic, is seen by the bright sunshine in the middle distance (also, women did not wash clothes at night). The women are not crushed by the blackness unlike the *cargadores* with their bent backs. The women are not falling down, but processing, stately and secure. Unlike the toppling rectangular box of the central *cargador*, the white laundry bundle of the central *lavandera* forms the capital of a solid column. Like the box, the bundle and the rectangular basket push steadily above the diagonals into the black area from their solid horizontal bases. Their light color also brings them forward to the attention of the viewer. Unlike *Cargadores*, downward pressure is not pushing and squeezing the diagonals. Rather they are opening up and expanding like the fan-like spread of the three washerwomen at the bottom. They rise buoyant above the elements of the external architectural frame. The upward strength of human being and culture is still stronger than the downward force of conquest.

The threat of the black section is not particularized like the foreign industrial exploitation of *Cargadores*. The mesa that Charlot turned into the fortress there is still its natural self in *Lavanderas*. But the unspecified menace is only too real and lends a heroic quality to the village women's maintenance of their everyday life. They still have a place to dry their sheets in the sun.¹¹¹ Although their men would normally leave washing to the women, their absence in the panel becomes troubling when the viewer sees *Lavanderas* and *Cargadores* together. Charlot's 1922 woodcuts, discussed in Chapter 7, illustrate a later chapter in the history.

Another theme of Charlot, which he will express often in several media, is that women in the Post-Conquest situation are the main transmitters of their culture to future generations. Whereas the *cargadores* wear plain colonial clothing, the women's is more traditional and decorated with embroidered borders; the women are maintaining their art traditions. As Flores writes:

[Charlot gives] some of the women masklike faces that recall physiognomies from Olmec sculpture. Through this allusion, he evokes the once great civilizations that populated Mexico—the ancestors of the oppressed people depicted. (2013: 121)

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As discussed above, Charlot often included children in his artworks to represent the future generation. A girl watches the three *lavanderas* at the pool and will learn to imitate them. In the preparatory geometric sketch, she holds a doll, which alludes to the generation after her.

After its destruction by Rivera, *Listones* survives only in Charlot's two preparatory geometric drawings and a poor black and white photograph, making the interpretation of several points difficult. The earlier drawing is without figures and the later with them; I will call them the figureless geometric drawing and the figured.

According with the agreed plan of alternating labors and *fiestas*, the next panels moving inwards are by Amado and depict *fiestas*. The next two panels inward would have depicted labors, and the "center panel" was Charlot's *Dance of the Ribbons* (MMR 278). The plan for the wall was thus:

Lavanderas – El Torito – work – Listones – work – Los Santiagos – Cargadores

This plan was stopped when the two young muralists were fired, and Rivera destroyed *Listones* in order to paint his triptych, *El Tianguis*, on the three central panels. As a result, the over-all organization of the north wall—the design that coordinated compositionally the panels among themselves—cannot now be defined with certainty. The intention to create such a design is already clear from what has been said above about Charlot's framing panels, *Cargadores* and *Lavanderas*. Further evidence is found in the connections between those panels and the adjacent ones by de la Cueva. As seen above, the diagonal rising right to left in *Cargadores* ends at the top corner of the rectangular door frame on the left. In *Los Santiagos*, the line of the top of a rounded hill emerges at the same point on the right, or next to *Cargadores*—that is, the line is continuous—and arches to approximately the same point on the left of the panel. Together both panels are creating the impression of a dome form arching over the north wall, a form echoed by the domed church on top of the hill in *Los Santiago*, an absolute contrast to the similarly placed, undomed "Satanic mill." The dome form is repeated thrice in the top section of *El Torito* and resembles the globular laundry bundle of *Lavanderas*. Moreover, the circular fireworks are placed approximately level with the laundry bag and the circular basket behind it. In all likelihood, the two unrealized work panels adjacent to *Listones* would have been equally coordinated.

This overall design of the north wall is important for understanding the composition of *Listones*, the central panel. The dance poles in *Listones* rise high and diverge outward as if supporting the unseen dome suggested by the compositions of the end murals. Also, the middle *cargadores* rise inward towards the left, away from the viewer, and on a diagonal that suggests a space going behind the north wall. Similarly, two *lavanderas* descend outward towards the viewer from the right, that is, from the space behind the wall, thus adding the left part of the unseen circular space behind the wall. *Listones* completes this circle with the composition of the foreground dancers as forming a circle bulging towards the viewer. The suggested background circle has emerged front and center. Moreover, the deep three dimensions of *Listones* in the center of the north wall fit the deepest part of the suggested dome. That is, the viewer of the north wall is presented with a half section of a dome structure with its close sides and deep center. Perhaps in the artists' plan, the south wall would have provided the other half section of the structure.

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The structure may have symbolized a sanctuary, like the domed church of *Los Santiagos*, with the black sections of *Cargadores* and *Lavanderas* walled off from the interior.

Thematically, *Listones* joins male and female, adults and children, in a true *fiesta*. The setting is a village plaza that is set securely in its geographic site. The background mountains echo the two poles separated by lower, flatter ground. Local plants grow from the plaza floor. The whole community is swept up in the unifying motion of the dance. The traditional character of the dance is emphasized by the dancers' masks. The children dance—some clockwise, others counterclockwise—holding the ends of ribbons attached to a pole; as the dancers intertwine the ribbons around the pole, they come ever closer together. They form a community at home physically and culturally. Moreover, the traditions are being transmitted to the next generation. In *Lavanderas*, a single girl represented the posterity. In *Listones*, all the children of the village have learned the dance. The central panel of the north wall is happy and optimistic. Left to themselves, Indians thrive in their own culture.

As seen above, the composition of *Cargadores* emphasized two-dimensional, planar, or surface composition while *Lavanderas* emphasized three-dimensional mass or bulk. In *Listones*, Charlot uses both types of composition in equal measure. Surface composition is immediately striking in the poles and ribbons—"the rotation of stylized figures about a central point" (Schmeckebeier 1939: 46)—and is revealed in Charlot's figureless drawing: the precise angles of the ribbons are mathematically defined. Other passages of surface geometry are suggested, especially the use of triangles, prominent in the figureless drawing. A series of triangles can be discerned with their bases against the left edge of the panel. The largest is connected to the leftmost dancer, starting in back of his upraised right hand and descending diagonally to his left hand and finally down to his waist. This triangle is emphasized by the ribbons he holds and by the interior dancer in the shadow just behind him. Two smaller triangles are found behind his back and behind his left leg. The above triangles are coordinated with those based on the bottom edge of the panel, discussed below. The analysis of this surface composition could be pursued far, but I will refer to it only in relation to the three-dimensional composition below. Charlot is always careful to maintain the importance of the picture plane, for instance, by making the furthest dancer unusually large, which brings him forward.

The space of *Listones* differs from the tripartite, stage flats scheme in both *Cargadores* and *Lavanderas*: large foreground figures, small middle-ground ones, and a distant mountain and sky scape. In *Listones*, foreground and middle ground are unified in one sweep from the feet of the dancers at the bottom of the panel to the line of buildings bordering the plaza. The third space—mountain and sky scape—is behind the buildings after an unseen extension of space. This is the element closest to the compositions of *Cargadores* and *Lavanderas* and was used by Charlot in prints and paintings to compare and contrast village construction with geographical formation: the straight man-made lines of buildings with the natural curves of mountains. The rectangular bricks of the buildings emphasize their fabrication and horizontality.

As can be seen from the figured preparatory drawing, Charlot carefully coordinated the placement of the roofline with that of the ridgeline in relation to the external architectural door frame of

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the Ministry aisle. The outermost element of that frame is a thin, flat border of concrete. On the left, the bottom edge of the horizontal border marks the roofline, and the top edge marks the beginning of the ridgeline. On the right, with no mountain in the background, the top edge marks the topmost roofline of the whole series. (The light tone [in the photograph] of that rightmost building frames the sole adult in the image, the representative of the village audience.)

The main three-dimensional indicator is the tipping of the foreground pole forwards and the background pole backwards, which recalls the tipping of the staffs in *Cargadores*. Charlot composed this effect carefully in the figureless preparatory drawing. He emphasized the opposed tipping by a device that joined a three-dimensional with a two-dimensional impression. The two top light ribbons from the right of the background pole descend diagonally parallel to the picture plane down to the two dancers holding their ends. However, one of the dancers is hidden by the foreground pole, and the other is only partially visible. Thus the viewer can have the impression that the two ribbons are moving forwards three-dimensionally and are attached to the foreground pole. Since the ribbons are so straight, they seem to be tautened by the opposed tipping of the poles, adding to the overall depth impression of the plaza.

Charlot uses three dimensions also to explain the dance to the viewer. The dancers at the background pole are not long into their dance and are, therefore, far away from the pole and each other. The foreground dancers have almost finished their dance. As their ribbons have been progressively wrapped around the pole, the remaining sections have been shortened, and the dancers have been pulled closer to the pole and to each other. The dance is thus explained clearly to the viewer along with its meaning or purpose: bringing the community closer together. Moreover, looking from the background group to the foreground, the viewer receives the impression of *focusing* as the larger circle seems to tighten into a smaller one around the pole. The background circle could not fit into the foreground, but the foreground group fits tightly into the mural frame. The final image is in focus, in frame.

Charlot coordinates both two- and three-dimensional composition to express the foreground group dancing around the pole. Although the pole in the photograph appears to be painted flat or two-dimensional, the viewer knows that in three-dimensions it is columnar and determines the shape of the dancing circle. This shape can be traced through the heads of five dancers and the upraised arm of a sixth. The foreground section of the circle rises slightly to echo the background section. At foot level, the circle is expressed by a line that can be drawn from the right foot of the left dancer past the left foot of the central dancer to the left foot of the right background figure. At mid-level, the difference in the angle of the raised right thighs of the left dancer and the central one express the turn around the circle (this was added after the preparatory drawing). The thigh of the central dancer and that of the shadowed dancer behind him produce the same circular motion. The opposing thigh of the right clockwise dancer is flat against the picture plane, thus introducing a two-dimensional element. That element clarifies that the right thigh of the central dancer is in fact at a three-dimensional angle. Thus circular design at top, middle, and bottom constructs a barrel shape that echoes that of the pole. Smaller details add to the effect. For instance, one foot of left dancer and one of the right of the right are twisted backwards towards the path they came from, while the opposite feet step out on the path they are taking. The

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backwards pointing feet initiate diagonals that carry through the group, creating an X. Other rectangles can be found as well.

The raised and lowered legs and feet express the rhythmic movement of the dance. The impression is created mostly through ascending and descending surface lines. For instance, two triangles are set on the bottom edge of the panel. The outer angles of the first are defined by the left feet of the left and middle dancers. The second triangle rises from the toes of the left foot of the middle dancer up to the left knee of the right dancer and then descends down the left leg of the background dancer and the right foot of the right dancer to the right bottom corner. Both triangles are repeated in the triangular shapes on the ground. The coordination of two- and three-dimensional composition is expert, using the peculiar strengths of each to create the desired total effect.

Understanding *Listones* is rendered difficult by the lack of a color record. In the black and white photograph, the interior dancers are hard to distinguish. In the figured preparatory drawing, the two dancers at the back of the foreground circle have been colored blue, which helps connect their heads and torsos to their feet behind the legs and feet of the other dancers. Charlot would have used color to clarify the tightly packed figures in the foreground group and to add color to the tonal counterpoint evident in the photograph. In all likelihood, the colors of the masks were also significant.¹¹²

Listones was the only mural for which Charlot entered a positive remark in his diary: “crois mal de tout” ‘believe it not bad at all’ (Diary June 19, 1923). Others at the time admired it as well. Vasconcelos, confused as to the subject, called it “el precioso fresco del volantín a la Secretaría” ‘the precious fresco of the kite at the Secretaría’ (John Charlot 2009: 34). Bertram Wolfe wrote:

A remarkably fine painting, it seemed to me. In fact, I committed the indiscretion of telling Diego that it was a marvel of plastic organization and a fit companion for his finest panels, which put him in a fury and may have sealed its doom. (Wolfe 1963: 176)

My mother was told that someone praised *Listones* to Rivera as the best painting he had ever done.

Rivera’s destruction of the mural in 1925 was deeply painful for Charlot. The date of the event is not recorded, but Charlot’s diary entry of March 11, 1925, reads: “Diego me lâche pour chercher ma place” ‘Diego lets me go to seek my place.’ As I understand this cryptic text, Diego was abandoning him, firing him from what duties remained to him, in order to have the panel on which the *Listones* was painted. Afterwards, Charlot recorded his depressed mood often in his diary and wrote later:

I knew of his intention and hoped to carefully chop off a choice bit of my panel to keep as both souvenir and justification. But early one morning, entering the court with Pablo O’Higgins, I found that the masons had hammered it all down without previous notice. A search of the debris for a crumb large enough to include a bit of design proved fruitless. (*MMR* 278 f.)

Pablo O’Higgins remembered:

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Jean was very hurt about it and was quite... and I never knew really the whole reasons of these things because I was not working with Diego. I didn't... That was when I had just arrived, you know. Maybe about a month afterwards, when this was taken out. And Jean... we went there, and he showed me how it had fallen to pieces, and it was very sad, you know. And I don't understand really why that was done.¹¹³

A number of other murals by Charlot were destroyed in his lifetime, which he regarded as “tragic,” including the large *Early Contacts of Hawai'i with Outer World* (11' X 67') of 1951/1952. When he heard that his own panel from the 1934 Straubenmüller Textile High School project would be destroyed, he painted a copy of a detail, which he used later in his 1944 Athens mural *Time Discloseth All Things*. He painted the canoe section of the 1966 *Early Contacts of Hawai'i with Outer World* because he feared that his 1956 *Chief's Canoe* was in danger. Both his murals at Notre Dame and Syracuse were at one time threatened. This perpetual worry began with the destruction of *Listones*.

Rivera intended even worse, as Anita Brenner reported on April 10, 1926:

Carlos Mérida in this morning. Tells me Diego proposed to remove frescos Charlot and Amado from Secretaría. He can't now, I don't think, though he might. Carlos says Diego said he'd offer them six hundred pesos, *por cuenta de la Secretaría*, and if they accepted the frescos would be removed, and if they didn't, they would be removed also. Diego wants the whole thing to himself, of course, but wants the removal with publicity of approval, in order to establish a precedent and thereby safeguard his own stuff. He is a magnificent *sin vergüenza* [good-for-nothing with no shame]. (Glusker 2010: 129)

Charlot remembered Rivera telling him that only work subjects would be used in the second court, not works and *fiestas*. But after he destroyed *Listones*, he painted *fiesta* dances there himself (Tabletalk early 1970s?). Rivera continued to destroy the murals of other artists, for instance, Leal's in the Ministry of Health; “this naturally caused bitter resentment” (Schmeckebier 1939: 159). When Rivera's Rockefeller Center mural was destroyed, “there were not lacking persons ill-disposed towards Rivera” who brought up his own behavior (Wolfe 1939: 191). Rivera later painted his own version of the *Dance of the Ribbons*, partially based on Charlot's work, on the wall to the west of *Lavanderas*:

The figures below, dancing in puppet-like stylized movements, are taken directly over from Charlot's composition, but rearranged and subordinated in a more complex and static scene.¹¹⁴

8.2.1.3. SHIELDS

I have narrated above the sequence and circumstances of Charlot's painting shields in the Preparatoria and the Ministry of Education. Charlot was unhappy about being dismissed from the large walls of the Ministry's second court and assigned much smaller panels, but he characteristically set to work with a will on the *Shield of the National University of Mexico, with Eagle and Condor* above the door perpendicular to *Massacre* (coincidentally, the site of a destroyed panel by Juan Cordero).

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Significantly, Charlot started by going to the zoo to draw eagles and condors from nature. The three surviving preparatory drawings concentrate on the heads and talons of the birds, which are emphasized in the fresco. That is, Charlot wanted to treat his subjects realistically in three dimensions rather than heraldically in two. His eagle and condor are impressively powerful and noble. Charlot reveals the perception that inspired their symbolic use while using them symbolically at the same time.

Charlot attaches the panel to *Massacre* first with the reds of the shield and the neck of the condor that relate to the vermillion spears. The eagle's head faces towards the similarly shaped topmost feather of the Indian headdress on the left edge of the *Massacre*. The two feathers behind it face towards similar opposing feathers on the right. That is, the heads of the eagle and condor are made part of a series of facing relationships. The top right background of the panel is dark, connecting it to the top section of the mural. That background lightens gradually towards the left (except for the top left corner). In the middle section, occupied by the two birds, the tones move in the opposite direction, from the darker gray condor to the golden brown eagle. This is varied by the white of the condor's neck and the white highlight on the eagle's beak, both elements pushing towards the picture plane. The bright foreground shield is not treated two-dimensionally but is a real shield held forwards in a talon each by the two birds and resting on the external base of the architectural framework. The bright border of the shield is close to the condor's red neck, and the browner interior is closer to the eagle's feathers. The same alternation between darker and lighter can be found moving three-dimensionally into the depth of the image as moving horizontally in two dimensions. A possibility is that the Latin American continent has been given a twist at the bottom to make it look like a bird beak: the shape of the eagle head would then descend to the middle and turn right and then rise towards the condor head, unifying the whole by means of an abstracted shape. Finally, the panel has been painted with unusually visible brushstrokes, lending energy to a conventionally static image.

Charlot painted nine shields on the second floor of the Ministry's second court in 1923, as seen above. The small size of the panels and shields, and their set image and pre-existing style left little room for artistic innovation. Nonetheless, in the three shields identified by Charlot as his—*Hidalgo*, *San Luis Potosí*, and *Guerrero*, respectively, the fourth, fifth, and ninth—he creates a personalized result by introducing or emphasizing the third dimension in a traditionally heraldic two-dimensional image. I will discuss only these three shields.

The state of Hidalgo is named for Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, who began the struggle for independence in 1810. The bottom section of *Hidalgo* with its military drum represents the pitted battlefields of Mexican history. In the upper section, Las Navajas Hill stands for the land originally possessed by the Mexican people. The tolling bell recalls the call to arms, and the Phrygian cap the ultimate positive result of the revolution. Behind the shield, the Virgin of Guadalupe flag was Hidalgo's, and the flag of the Mexican nation again represents his ultimate success.

In *Hidalgo*, the foreground pitted ground is depicted much more realistically than in any other examples I have seen. The drum, bell, and Phrygian cap are *all* tipped strongly to emphasize their three-dimensionality, whereas only normally only one or two would be tipped. They are also modeled

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thoroughly to emphasize that dimension. As a result of this three-dimensionality, a torsion is constructed with the *top* of the drum tipped forward while the *bottoms* of the bell and cap are so tipped. Also, the upward tip of the ground does not accord with that of the drum. A different perspective grid is being used for each that emphasizes the drum by floating it in its own space. Charlot acknowledges the two-dimensionality in the traditional image with the mountain above a dividing line painted flat against a flat background. Finally, he takes advantage of the last opportunity for the third dimension in the depiction of the flags behind the shield. In other examples of the shield, they can be depicted either as two-dimensional or three, and Charlot gives them an obvious bulge. The flagstaffs are placed clearly behind the narrow gold frame of the shield. In sum, Charlot treats all but one element, the mountain, three-dimensionally and performs variations with the possibilities thus provided.

In the shield of San Luis Potosí, Saint Louis, king of France, stands on San Pedro Hill and the entrances to its gold and silver mines. The background is divided into blue and yellow or night and day, with gold ingots on the blue and silver on the yellow. The interesting image dated from early Colonial times, and Charlot was probably happy to paint a French saint, a French king with his traditional blue and ermine cloak. But he apparently felt the need to counter the saint's connection to gold and silver. To do this, he drew on his knowledge of French history and Christian iconography. In his right hand, Louis holds the "Hand of Justice," a type of scepter bestowed at the coronation. The forefinger points upward to God in Heaven, the source of all justice. In his left hand, Louis holds two famous relics, the Crown of Thorns—for which he built the Sainte Chapelle—and the cloth with which Veronica wiped the bloody face of Jesus on his way to his crucifixion. Moreover, despite his rich cloak, Louis is dressed in a simple white robe, is barefoot, and wears a cap, not a crown as in other examples of the shield. The saint was known for his simple attire. In Charlot's mind, justice, Jesus's salvific death, and the simplicity of poverty were antithetical to money.

The figure of Saint Louis, although simple, is touching: he closes his eyes in prayer while opening his arms towards the viewer, a gesture echoed vertically by the scrolls on either side. In his youth, Charlot invested stereotyped codex figures with life through his characteristic energetic line. In *San Luis Potosí*, the unexpected tilt of Louis's head is expressive: he is not standing on his kingly dignity but inclining towards the person he invites into his arms.

As opposed to *Hidalgo*, the scrollwork frame is prominent and complicated, an homage to the shield's sixteenth-century origins. The frame is also carefully coordinated with the shield's image. As stated above, the side scrolls are vertical echoes of the saint's outstretched arms and hands. The top scroll also repeats the arms and hands emerging from a central dip that echoes the neckline on the robe. At the bottom, the two flat extensions extend the outward position of the saint's feet. A concave curve relates to the similar one at the "neckline" of the top scroll, creating the inside of a spatial tube up the center of the image. This concave tube is filled by the convex hill and columnar robe. The cape provides both the convex front of the tube and a suggestion of its back. The upward cone of the hill is answered by the downward arc of the cloak, which is repeated by the front of the robe, the necklace, and the neckline. The saint holds the reminder of the three-dimensional tube in the Hand of Justice and of the two-dimensional circular elements in the Crown of Thorns held parallel to the picture plane. Similarly, the three-

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dimensional ingots are applied to flat colored backgrounds. Those protruding ingots—rectangular truncated pyramids—contrast with the circular convex pits in the hill.

Charlot adds to this geometric variety a play with light. The ingots—especially the gold—are lighted from directly in front. The hill is light on its left side and dark on its right, so the source of light is on the left. However, the pits are lighted on their left sides and dark on their right, which means that the source of the light is on the right. The saint's face is light on the right side and dark on the left; the light is thus on the right and contrasts with the pits because the face is a protruding solid while the pits are concave. However, the saint's right hand is lighter than his left, which would place the light source on the left. In sum, the small image seems to have three sources of light. Charlot may have been inspired by an element of the original shield: the placing of the gold ingots on the blue, night background and silver on the yellow, day, creating an interlocking of day and night, gold and silver. The frontal lighting of the ingots and the flat backgrounds follow this original design. Charlot's play with the two other sources of light may be referring to the separate light sources of day and night: sun and moon. In any case, the unrealistic light invests the small image with mystery.

In *Guerrero*, Charlot made more changes than in any of his other Ministry shields. He eliminated entirely the eleven feathers, diadem, and cane above the main image of the shield, replacing them with a crown and scrollwork that echoed and varied the top of the facing shield of Michoacán. The warrior's weapon has been simplified by showing only its staff, a beautifully placed straight line parallel to the horizontals in the design of the warrior's shield. He also replaced the traditional colors of the warrior's feathered shield, symbol of power, with two shades of dark brown. This was unrealistic because such shields were made of brightly colored feathers. The only color symbolism he retained was the background blue for water and sky and the warrior's spotted jaguar skin uniform, symbol of the starry night sky and its god Tezcatlipoca. Despite these changes to the original shield, the warrior's costume makes a more historically correct impression than those of the Aztec dancers in *Massacre*.

Charlot's changes and retentions in the symbolism suggest his message. The now brown shield has the shape of the hill in *San Luis Potosí*; it can be viewed as a hill against the blue sky. The image, as simplified by Charlot, recalls the Náhuatl word *āltepētī* 'water and hill,' 'water-hill,' or 'mountain of water,' a reference to a location or town and its traditional inhabitants: "those two elements being fundamental necessities for a community" (Karttunen 1983: 9). The warrior's skin is the brown of the darkest designs on the shield, designating him as belonging to the land. By reducing the symbolism, Charlot has arrived at a core Náhuatl cultural ideal: the unity of human being and locality—earth, sky, and water.

The warrior is poised to defend his land, in all likelihood against the three facing Spanish kings of *Michoacán*. From slightly lower than the left curve of his circular shield, his jaguar skin uniform on his left arm and shoulder curves up left and then right—revealing his face capped by the head section of the skin—and turns left again to place the jaguar's nose in front of the weapon's shaft. The skin, symbol of the god, adds his power to the thrust like an *ahlatl* or *atlatl*, the Aztec dart- or spear-thrower. The warrior himself is depicted simultaneously from two points of view. If one looks at his left arm holding

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the shield, he faces the viewer. But if one looks at his right hand holding the spear, he has his back to the viewer. Such a modernist visual device reveals again that although Charlot depreciated the shields, he created them with his design and craft integrity. The shields are thus a preview of his 1924 small-scale oils.

Charlot's last shield was *Eagle and Serpent, Mexico's National Emblem* in the Preparatoria, on the corresponding panel of his earlier *Shield of the National University of Mexico, with Eagle and Condor*, that is, adjacent to Leal's mural. Charlot has stripped away all heraldic elements and depicts a real eagle fighting a real serpent. In *Eagle and Condor*, he portrayed those great birds in such a way that the viewer felt why they had been made into icons. In *Eagle and Serpent*, he returns to the event that convinced the Mexicah immigrants that they had reached the site of their new capital, Tenochtitlan. Charlot may have been inspired by the magnificent eagle on the first page of the Codex Mendoza that in its observed detail and three-dimensionality contrasts with the hieratic, two-dimensional glyphs that surround it.

Charlot's design accentuates the animals' combat. At the top, the three curves of the eagle's wings and head give the impression of the up and down shaking of the serpent in the eagle's beak. The serpent looks like it started to fight in the square shape of the panel. The serpent's upper body on the left turns right at its neck and head, and its tail on the right also has a right angle. But the serpent's head is being pushed down and bent by the eagle's beak, and the vertical of its tail has been pushed into a diagonal by the eagle's talon. The writhing serpent makes three curves on the ground, but they reveal its vulnerability rather than its attack. It is trying to stretch its body out so that it will be parallel to the base, but its last extension is being pushed in so that all the curves will be together under those of the eagle at the top. The serpent is being squeezed inwards from its fighting shape. The aggressive reddish brown of the eagle is beginning to tint even the gray serpent. Charlot's remarkable brushstrokes convey the energy of the struggle.

8.2.1.4. CUAUHTEMOC AND SAINT CHRISTOPHER

St. Christopher and *Cuautemoc* were the last frescoes Charlot painted in Mexico, completing the cycle in the stairwell of the Preparatoria that contained his *Massacre* and two shields and Leal's mural.¹¹⁵ Unfortunately, they are the only ones that have not been cleaned, and decades of grime cover the images and obscure the colors to a degree that makes seeing them, much less analyzing them, difficult. The subjects and themes are, however, clear. *Cuautemoc* depicts the hanging by the Spanish of Cuāuhtemōc, successor of Moctezuma II and last emperor. The panel is placed so that Cuāuhtemōc seems to receive the attacking Spaniards of *Massacre*. The unjust execution can be considered the nadir of the Conquest. Moreover, the stiff rope behind Cuāuhtemōc's head resembles a post, suggesting the later burning of pagans, Jews, and heretics by the Colonial government. *Cuautemoc* thus continues the downward movement of *Massacre*.

St. Christopher represents the beginning of the upward movement that culminates in Leal's mural: the successful syncretism of indigenous religion with Christianity in the worship of the people, a major element of Post-Conquest Mexican culture. St. Christopher had been made a symbol of bringing

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Christianity to the Americas as Charlot described in his study of a famous Colonial mural example: “El San Cristóbal de Santiago Tlatelolco”:

Como tantas otras costumbres implantadas por los conquistadores, el culto de San Cristóbal adquiere matices distintos en el Nuevo Mundo. El más importante es el paralelo que se establece entre la vida del santo y el de su tocayo, el descubridor de las Américas. El Cristóbal de la antigüedad atraviesa una corriente llevando a hombros al Niño Jesús, cuyo peso sobrepasa la fuerza del gigante: Colón, el nuevo Cristóbal, atraviesa el océano cargando sobre las espaldas el edificio gigantesco de la Iglesia Católica y también agotándose en el esfuerzo.¹¹⁶ (October 1945)

‘Like so many other customs implanted by the conquistadors, the cult of Saint Christopher acquired distinct nuances in the New World. The most important is the parallel that established itself between the life of the saint and of his namesake, the discoverer of the Americas. The Christopher of antiquity crossed a stream bearing the Infant Jesus on his shoulders, whose weight surpassed the strength of the giant: Columbus, the new Christopher, crossed the ocean carrying on his back the gigantic edifice of the Catholic Church and exhausting himself at the same time in the effort.’

By separating the event of the *Massacre*, the Conquest, from that of evangelization, Charlot avoided the conflict he referred to in his 1922 poem *Matière II*: “ce Christophore en visière” ‘this Christopher in a visor’ (1920–1924 Civil).

St. Christopher had also a personal religious meaning for Charlot, which he expressed, for instance, in his *Vraiment, ne m’ennuyez plus avec Votre croix* of January 14, 1922 (1920–1924 Civil). God is a terrible weight who prevents Charlot from having a normal life. He is like Christopher wading through a murky river of temptations and weighed down by an ever heavier burden:

retraverser ce fleuve immonde
quantés fois cru banni, chêne au poing, Christophore
haineux, sous l’Enfant qui pèse plus lourd qu’un monde.

‘to cross again this filthy stream
so many times thought banished, oak-trunk in my fist, hateful Christopher,
under the Child who weighs more than a world.’

Pèse ‘weigh’ is used both in the sense of to be heavy and to be important.

Charlot was not the only muralist interested in using this prominent Colonial symbol. In 1923, Siqueiros had started *San Cristóbal y la Mujer*, symbolizing *mestizaje* ‘racial mixture’: “el santo gigante... simbolizó la conquista religiosa y la monumental mujer represento la grandiosidad del indígena” ‘the giant saint...symbolized the religious conquest and the monumental woman represented the grandiosity of the indigenous.’¹¹⁷ From the end of 1924 to beginning of 1925, de la Cueva painted a now-destroyed mural, *San Cristóbal*, in Guadalajara (Prampolini 2012 Volume 2: 157 ff.). As far as I know, Charlot’s mural is the only surviving witness to the muralists’ interest in this subject.

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Charlot coordinated his two new panels together as well as with the earlier murals. The monumental figures of Cuāuhtemōc and Saint Christopher dominate their tall, narrow panels—their bare feet resting on the base (Saint Christopher’s are under the water)—and are turned towards each other. In *Saint Christopher*, leafy branches from his staff curve backwards to the left and meet the top right block of the architectural frame of *Eagle and Serpent*. In *Cuauhtemoc*, three trees on the battlement make the same movement towards the right and *Eagle and Condor*. Saint Christopher’s staff rises on a left to right diagonal towards the center of the wall. Behind Cuāuhtemōc, a hill rises in the opposite direction towards the center. Both figures play upon the grid suggested by the horizontal lines of their architectural frames. The contrast is between the massive, muscular physique of Saint Christopher and the lithe Indian strength of Cuāuhtemōc. The emperor accepts his fate with his head held high. The giant glances back fearfully at the small child on his shoulder. With different mysteries and missions, each contributes to the Mexican religious synthesis.

8.2.2. PRINTS

8.2.2.1.Lithography

In Europe, from the late nineteenth century, lithography had been revived as an important art medium, especially in book illustrations. But after a significant use in periodicals, lithography was being used in Mexico primarily for commercial purposes.¹¹⁸ Charlot and Emilio Amero are credited with recovering its art potential.¹¹⁹ Amero recalled the beginnings:

El relato de mis actividades como litógrafo, data en realidad desde la fecha en que tuve la buena ventura de conocer a Jean Charlot.
como en cierta ocasión, caminando por la calle, Charlot y yo nos detuvimos frente a la casa de un impresor. En la entrada, pegado a lo que fuera el cancel, había unos carteles anunciando películas italianas que por aquel entonces estaban [*sic*] de moda. Pregunte a Jean, de si había razón por que nosotros no podríamos hacer lo mismo, es decir; dibujar de la misma manera con que estaban hechos los carteles. Muy pronto Charlot y yo estábamos platicando con el impresor y unos días mas tarde Jean en un lado y yo en el otro, dibujábamos en una piedra litográfica. Si mal no recuerdo, Charlot hizo un retrato del escultor Pintao. Razones económicas impidieron en mi caso, que continuara haciendo litografias y mas tarde cuando lo intente, el impresor había desaparecido.¹²⁰

‘The story of my activities as a lithographer date in reality from the date in which I had the good fortune to know Jean Charlot.

...on a certain occasion, walking in the street, Charlot and I stopped in front of the firm of a printer. In the entrance, stuck on what was the inner gate, were some posters announcing Italian movies, which were then in fashion. I asked Jean if there was any reason we ourselves could not do the same, that is, draw in the same way that the

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posters were made. Very soon Charlot and I were talking with the printer, and a few days later, Charlot on one side and I on the other were drawing on a lithographic stone.¹²¹ If I remember correctly, Charlot made a portrait of the sculptor Pintao. In my case, economic reasons impeded me from continuing to make lithographs, and later, when I intended to, the printer had disappeared.’

Charlot’s diary records that he drew a preparatory portrait of Germán List Arzubide on November 6, 1923, drew it on the lithographic stone on November 12, corrected it on November 13, and was happy with the edition on November 13: “Very good” (M47). This was Charlot’s first collaboration with a printer, a relationship that he would enjoy with several others through his life. The printer for Charlot was like the mason on fresco: his craftsmanship was an essential part of the team effort and result.

Charlot’s first lithograph was the *Portrait of List Arzubide*, done for Maples Arce’s edition of *Esquina: Poemas de Germán List Arzubide*, the first publication of Ediciones del Movimiento Estridentista.¹²² Several preparatory drawings exist for the print, and they all look up at the craggily monumental, heroic head of the poet. List Arzubide was delighted with the portrait, which he found “realizado con verdadero cariño” ‘realized with true affection’ (May 11, 1981). He used it until the end of his life and wrote me in 1992 that it evoked for him the happy years in which it had been created (e.g., List Arzubide 1927: 42; and see below). In the print, Charlot uses at least three different tones for his lines, exploiting a possibility in lithography that was unavailable in woodcut. Unlike the *Mental Portrait of Maples Arce* (M40), the portrait is realistic like the portraits of friends and colleagues Charlot had been drawing for at least a year. The interpretation is in the ruggedness of the poet’s character, more struggle than salon. In contrast, the woodcut cover of *Esquina* is in the modernistic style favored by Maples Arce (M46).

A larger project was a portfolio of lithographs to be coordinated with texts by the communist people’s poet Carlos Gutiérrez Cruz, “The Poet in Overalls.¹²³ Although the portfolio was never published it was announced on February 21, 1924:

un álbum de *Ocho litografías* del pintor francés Jean Charlot con el que se inauguran las ediciones plásticas del movimiento estridentista.¹²⁴

‘a portfolio of *Eight Lithographs* of the French painter Jean Charlot, with which the plastic editions of the Estridentist movement is inaugurated.’

Although the poet’s name escaped Charlot in the following quotation, he could still recite one of his poems from memory in his interview with Stefan Baciu (1968: 69):

I don’t even know if the things were ever printed otherwise than in hand sheets that were passed on in the streets. But somebody eventually will discover or rediscover those poets to the people. That particular fellow, I don’t remember his name, perhaps I don’t know, but he was known as the “Poet in Overalls.” And he did run around in overalls to signify the fact that though he was a poet, he was also a plebeian. Of course, we were all plebeian; we didn’t have any money...

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for a while, I thought I was going to do a portfolio with this particular Poet in Overalls, that he would do the captions, the text, as short poems, while I would illustrate it with street types. In fact, I did do lithographs of the street types in preparation for the portfolio, and nothing really came out of it. But it shows certainly that there was an easier relationship; that is, I don't think I asked—I waited for him to ask me to do something. The idea was a collaboration, which it wasn't with the Estridentistas—not a true collaboration; it was just a gesture on our part for friends. (Interview June 12, 1971)

As I have shown in Chapter 7, Section 2.2.1.2, Charlot copied his street sketches for the lithographs. Charlot did not redraw them freely but, except for M48, used “pinholes to help copy the design on the stone” (M49; also 50–55). Charlot wanted to preserve the quality of his pencil sketches and used lithography to reproduce it with its potential for different pressures of the grease pen and thus tones. He succeeded in making the lithographs look like drawings, but did not exploit other virtues of lithography. The master printer and historian of Mexican graphics, Francisco Díaz de León, criticized this early work: “In 1923, Emilio Amero and Jean Charlot tried to revive the process. Their first attempts were timid and vague, and they were unable to raise lithography to the same high place to which they had brought wood engraving” (Díaz de León 1938: 13). Charlot's next lithograph, *Dance: Chalma* of July 30/August 1, 1925 (M68), was also an outline drawing. Only in his next *Temascal* (M69) did he begin to explore other qualities of lithography, including modeling, tusche “to darken further the black areas on each print,” and texturing of the paper: “The drawing was done on a very thin paper, held against a blank canvas, so the grain is that of the canvas.” That Charlot was applying his experience as a painter is suggested by the fact that he was simultaneously painting an oil of the same subject: CL 117 *Temascal (Steam Bath) I*: “great, golden brown limbs in the dark” (Glusker 2010: 356). Secure diary mentions of the lithograph are from November 2 to 7, 1925 (mistakenly published as October in M69). On November 6, Charlot records: “commencé huile Temascal” ‘began oil Temascal’ (November 9, “continué Temascal” ‘continued Temascal’ most likely refers to this oil). In his Checklist entry, Charlot refers to the lithograph, and he later would paint preparatory sketches of lithographs, like the illustrations for *Carmen* (1939/1940) and *Picture Book II* (1972/1973; 1976: 215, 387). *Temascal* would be Charlot's last print until his 1927 *Mayan Head* (M70). Like *Esquina*, the cover of *Ocho Litografías* would have been a woodcut, probably M44 (see also 48).

8.2.2.2. Estridentistas

One of the problems of studying Charlot's relations with the Estridentistas and other poets is that he had serious lapses of memory in his interview with me of June 12, 1971, contradicting his earlier statements and those of others. The three most important are his forgetting that he had brought Rimbaud and Apollinaire with him to Mexico, that he had long discussions on poetry and other subjects with the Mexican poets, and that he participated in the 1924 Café de Nadie exhibition. As a result, his statements in the interview must be corrected against other sources. But his general intentions are significant, as seen below.

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Undiscussed in the secondary literature has been Charlot's own poetic writings, although he referred to them in the interview:

So I was, of course, writing at the time. I wrote rather heavily, as you know, and poetry and whatnot at the very time that I was doing the paintings, but that had no circulation whatsoever. In fact it never had any circulation, though it may in the future, fifty years after I did those things. (Interview June 12, 1971)

In my discussion in Volume 1, Chapter 4, and below, Charlot's poetry is clearly different and uninfluenced by both Estridentistas and Contemporáneos. As a result, he cannot be said to be generally inspired by their poetry, which is important in understanding his illustrations for their publications. Moreover, several statements I have already quoted demonstrate that Charlot's poems were at least known to some, as he in fact recalled later in the interview when discussing the poems of his that were published in the journal *Contemporáneos* (below).

The work of Stefan Baciu has focused attention on Charlot's collaboration with the Estridentistas, a subject that has since attracted a number of scholarly investigations.¹²⁵ In Mexico, poetry—like politics, intellectual movements, and the visual arts—formed into rival and hostile groups, equipped with friendly critics and reviews. As elsewhere, the avant-garde crossed literary and artistic boundaries. José Juan Tablada's poetry movement cooperated with artists starting in 1915 (Fauchereau 2013: 64). In the early 1920s, groups of artists and poets confronted each other with shifting alliances in their “fervor por la pintura mexicana—entonces tan discutida” ‘fervor for Mexican painting—so discussed at the time’ (Torres Bodet 1961: 284). The Estridentistas elevated artists to full membership and equal importance with poets:

El Estridentismo, y esto ha sido poco estudiado, hizo además de la literatura una importante contribución pictórica. Es un raro movimiento literario que se supo complementar [*sic*] con una propuesta plástica de perfiles peculiares, y esto fue logrado por sus grandes pintores: Ramón Alba de la Canal, Leopoldo Méndez[,] Revueltas y Jean Charlot. (List Arzubide April 12, 1994)

‘Estridentismo—and this has been little studied—was in addition to literature an important pictorial contribution. It is a rare literary movement that knew how to complement itself with a plastic proposition of characteristic features, and this was achieved by its great painters: Ramón Alba de la Canal, Leopoldo Méndez, Revueltas, and Jean Charlot.

Since the Estridentistas had been locked in combat with a rival group, the Contemporáneos, Charlot was apparently worried that he would be viewed as a partisan, when in fact his relations and friendships were deliberately wide and non-doctrinaire.¹²⁶ He had in fact planned to collaborate with the communist people's poet, Carlos Gutiérrez Cruz, and admired the novelist Mariano Azuelas:

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I like very much Azuelas as a writer. I think he's done wonderful things. Perhaps his writings that date of the Revolution are the closest thing in words to the things that we were trying to paint at the time. (Interview June 12, 1971)

In our interview, before beginning to discuss the Estridentistas, Charlot wanted to go on record about his relations with the Contemporáneos:

Well, I think that there were a different kind of poets. The ones you have probably in mind were the Estridentistas, which were the modern group, but there was a group of more conservative people. One of them was Jaime Torres Bodet, and he was already quite high in the government, something that corresponds to Minister of Culture or something, and then later on, he was named to the United Nations and became one of the first heads of UNESCO, for example. Now with those poets who were part of the establishment, the relation was simply that some of their bureaus were in charge of some of the jobs that were given to the painters, and if we met them, we usually met them behind their official desk.¹²⁷

Charlot told me several times that he liked the Francophile Torres Bodet. He spoke more critically of Salvador Novo for attacking Orozco—at Rivera's behest—and the mural movement in general.¹²⁸ This did not stop Charlot from working at the journal *Forma* with Novo and the anti-muralist artist Gabriel Fernández Ledesma. In fact, the only poems Charlot published in Mexico were in *Contemporáneos*.¹²⁹ Charlot remembered the occasion as a less controversial:

Well, that's an entirely different moment of my life. I was speaking of the early days in Mexico. From the time that I went to Yucatán and received American money as an archeologist, I cooled off, so to speak. We were not any more—in fact, all the group found more or less different ways of being more bourgeois in the six, seven years that had passed than at the beginning. And the poems were then published by the conservative group I was speaking of, Torres Bodet; I think, that magazine was published by Torres Bodet, who published some of his works in it, and the Estridentistas had no entry in that particular magazine. It was a magazine, I think, actually published with money from the government by people who were conservative. There was a sort of aura to the fact that I was writing in French, so that they thought it would be nice to put some French things in it. I don't remember how they knew I was doing those things, but I let them have those verses, which are contemporary with the publication—but the only thing of mine published contemporary with its writing. (Interview June 12, 1971)

When I met List Arzubide in 1992, I asked him, in my ignorance, about this publication. He smiled broadly and gave a small shrug. Charlot had friends in both camps, an example of the cordial relations that often existed across ideological boundaries. Both Xavier Villaurrutia and Enrique Fernández Ledesma (1888–1939), brother of the artist Gabriel, wrote laudatory articles on Charlot's work, and Villaurrutia and Charlot collaborated on an unrealized project.¹³⁰ List Arzubide wrote a note congratulating *Forma*:

Tu periódico es un monumento; honra a la juventud haciéndose digna del arte actual de México; me parece formidable. (1928).

‘Your periodical is a monument. It honors the youth making itself worthy of today’s Mexican art. To me it seems formidable.’

Charlot described the Estridentistas as the social opposites of the Contemporáneos:

On the other hand, there was the group of the Estridentistas, who were people about our age and not yet settled. Later on they would settle and in their turn become part of the establishment. For example, Maples Arce, who is usually considered the head or the founder, if you want, of Estridentismo, later on had a rather complete career as an ambassador in different countries. But for the moment they were young people, most of them practically unemployed as we were, because the employment we had would give us very little money. (Interview June 12, 1971)

In our interview of June 12, 1971, Charlot minimized his participation in Estridentismo: “My own relation was very slight. I’ve already told it to Stefan Baciu, who is writing now a serious history of Estridentismo.” First, Charlot remembered that both muralists and poets were too occupied with their own work to engage fully with each other:

Estábamos todos, pintores y escritores, siguiendo los mismos caminos, pero el trabajo no nos permitía que nos interesáramos mucho unos por otros. (Baciu 1968: 70)

‘Painters and writers, we were all following the same paths, but work did not permit us to interest ourselves much the ones in the others.’

Frankly, I wasn’t paying too much attention. There was a terrific concentration in those early days of mural painting on the things that *we* were doing, and of course, it was very hard physical work, done in extreme poverty, so to speak, and we had very little time for anything else. I don’t remember any painter, let’s say, going to concerts or even reading books, I would say. We were really creating something, I mean, some people have called it a Renaissance, and by experience I know that that takes all one’s strength. As far as I am concerned, the relation to the poets was one of friendship and to help them in the fix they were in because we ourselves were in a fix of our own. (Interview June 12, 1971)

I have given examples elsewhere of Charlot remembering work more than social relations.

As a result, according to Charlot, the poets did not understand well what the muralists were doing and used their work mostly for shock value:

That was outside the realm of their understanding, and we were good for what I would call small scandals. For example, those so-called caricatures of mine as a decoration for the cafe where they got together, but I don’t think that they had any concept that the things we were doing were of true importance, either for the future or for the nation, and so on and so forth.

...

But even the things that I considered directly within my work and that seemed to me to further the idea of art for the people were considered by the poets—I suppose they didn't know too much about the plastic arts—were considered like things that would also scandalize, and so they would use them as illustrations in the magazine. They would plaster them on the walls of the café where they got together, Café de Nadie, and I remember a reportage, for example, on the Café de Nadie in which it says that the walls show some Estridentist cartoons by Charlot. Well, the Estridentist cartoons are some, what I considered very good and very serious woodcuts of Mexican types, but anyhow for good reasons or bad reasons, there was a tie between the group of the painters and the group of the poets. (Interview June 12, 1971)

Charlot found the poets suffered from the same time-lapse between Europe and Mexico that he had found in the arts. Most importantly, the Estridentistas confounded Futurism and Cubism, not realizing that they were succeeding moments in the history of art.¹³¹ Illustrations in Estridentista publications exhibit a variety of seemingly irreconcilable styles (e.g., Fauchereau 2013: 70). Charlot's normal work was published alongside that done specially for Estridentista authors, and both were called Estridentista. Charlot's lithographic portrait of List Arzubide for his *Esquina* is stylistically different from the woodcut cover. Similarly, the artists—or at least Charlot himself—did not immerse themselves in Estridentista poetry:

I don't think I ever read in great detail the things I was illustrating, and I don't think the poets understood in great detail what we were doing, but there was a tie between the young men who were bent, certainly, on changing and changing as much as possible the order of things. (Interview June 12, 1971)

In view of the above, the idea of a consistent Estridentista esthetic in the visual arts and even in literature is debatable.¹³² This can be seen in the varying levels of collaboration of different artists with the Estridentistas. Emilio Amero had little contact (Zuñiga 2008: 58 f.). Rivera and Siqueiros shared some of their work with the Estridentistas but were not and are not identified closely with them, although List Arzubide defended “las ascendentes arquitecturas de Diego Rivera y de Jean Charlot” ‘the ascendant architectures of Diego Rivera and of Jean Charlot’ (1982: 50). Charlot collaborated much more but was still a special case (e.g., Fauchereau 2013: 73). Charlot said several times that Alva de la Canal was more closely connected to the movement (also, e.g., Fauchereau 2013: 73). He also named Germán Cueto, De Zayas, and Zárraga to Baciú (1968: 69). Charlot considered Revueltas “el más elástico, el más comprensivo” ‘the most flexible and understanding’ of the Estridentista artists:

And they had, some of them, I think, had grown up with some of the people, mostly Fermín Revueltas. Perhaps Revueltas had the easiest entry into the group of the poets because his brother, among other things, was a well-known musician, so he came in quite differently from people who had had in their past mostly, let us say, a military post with the Revolution, or no post at all. And Revueltas was very handy helping and doing pictures for the poets. The poets are the people who would publish those

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little magazines that never lasted very long. The best known one now is *Irradiador*. *Irradiador* was the organ of the Estridentista poets, and I think it is the Number One who had a cover that was one of the pictures of Revueltas. It had not been done for the cover. It was an easel painting, but it had caused, before my time, I would say, a little scandal, because it represented sort of a still life, and there was a menu on the table, and the menu said, “*Merde pour les bourgeois*” in French. So people thought that was a satirical statement, which of course, it was, and he became a friend of the nonconformists.¹³³

If one contrasts Rivera, Siqueiros, and Charlot to Alva de la Canal and Revueltas, the varying importance of Estridentismo to the individual artist is manifest. The first three did not need Estridentismo to learn modernism, but Estridentismo was foundational to the latter two artists.¹³⁴ Alva de la Canal moved from the conservatism of his first mural to the most interesting work of his career. Revueltas, as discussed above, was throughout his life interested in exploring new styles. That is, some artists helped establish Estridentismo’s modernist character—and, more even than other poets, were supporters from the beginning¹³⁵—and others were nourished by it.

The tolerant attitude of the Estridentistas resulted in a great variety of interesting work but raises the question of why some artists adhered to the movement and others did not. The impression is that if a writer or artist wanted to join the Estridentistas, he or she was welcomed.¹³⁶ This tolerance was aided by the general lack of appreciation at the time of the stylistic differences between the artists and even between the works of an individual artist like Charlot. As Rashkin writes:

During the 1920s, as “Stridentist” became a synonym for anything outlandish and bizarre, painters like Charlot and Rivera and poets like Maples Arce were linked in the public imagination as co-conspirators in a fantastic challenge to good taste. (2009: 61)

[The work of the young muralists] in 1923 conveys quite a different sensibility from that of their murals. Yet if we consider the context in which the murals were produced, the association makes more sense. In the first place, whatever their actual content, the murals’ “stridency” was taken for granted; like the Stridentist manifestos and poems, the murals were received by much of the public as blasphemous assaults on good taste. (2009: 66)

This contemporary attitude is of a piece with the common criticism of the murals’ *feísmo* ‘cult of the ugly.’ Charlot’s woodblocks of the poor were felt as provocative as his Cubistic illustrations.

This provocative attitude can indeed be found throughout Estridentismo, but it is based on a deeper purpose, as Charlot said:

there was a tie between the young men who were bent, certainly, on changing and changing as much as possible the order of things.

So they were in absolute good faith, and they enjoyed, of course, what they were

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doing, and it wasn't exactly a mystification because there was danger. That is, they certainly were considered as revolutionary poets, shall we say, and revolution in Mexico was still a thing that could be of life and death. It wasn't a question of style; it was a question of importance, and by destroying, if you want, or thinking that they were destroying a certain social order, there was danger. It wasn't just the pleasure of annoying the bourgeois. So even though what we were doing was very different, because the things we were doing were so close to architecture and so on that we didn't feel, we didn't want, in fact, to do fantastic things—we wanted to do things that would stand on their four feet, so to speak, and we wanted things that were clearly *lisible* to the people—nevertheless, we both, the poets and the painters, were doing things that were new and things that were a definite danger for us in the Mexico of the time, the social order or social disorder of the time. (Interview June 12, 1971)

That is, both muralism and Estridentismo arose from the Mexican Revolution, as Charlot emphasized:

La revolución en las artes y en la literatura nació de la revolución social mexicana, en medio de la cual estábamos viviendo, y de la cual, algunos participaban directamente. (Baciu 1968: 70)

'The revolution in the arts and in literature were born of the social Mexican Revolution, in the middle of which we were living and in which some were participating directly.'

el Estridentismo ha sido, en su tiempo, la expresión artística de la revolución mexicana. (Baciu 1982: 16)

'Estridentism was in its time the artistic expression of the Mexican Revolution.'

The social and cultural volatility was felt at the time:

El arte mexicano atraviesa por un periodo de profundo descontento. La pintura y la literatura más que ninguna otra forma, que ninguna otra expresión. (Ortega 1923: 31)

'Mexican art is passing through a period of profound discontent. Painting and literature more than any other form, than any other expression.'

Both artists and poets were united in "a common effort to shake the Mexican public into a new consciousness."¹³⁷ So much larger a purpose overrode stylistic differences:

While some critics have emphasized the differences between the groups—the nationalist indigenism of the muralists versus the Stridentists' urban futurist vision—it is ultimately the affinities that prevail. Both groups abhorred the notion of art for art's sake within the restricted milieu of the culture elite; both preferred posters and murals to salon exhibitions, and woodblock and chisel to oils and canvas. Even when the groups (and the individuals within them) differed in their interpretations of art's social function, they shared a fundamental belief in the need for art and artists to play an active, engaged part in society and in social struggle.¹³⁸

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The muralists and the Estridentistas thus invented a socially committed modernism that Flores identifies as the distinctive Mexican contribution to the worldwide movement (2013). As Baciu states, Estridentismo was the “primer movimiento de vanguardia hispano-americano de carácter *social*” ‘the first hispano-american vanguard movement of *social* character.’¹³⁹

Despite all the above, Charlot must have had an important, perhaps leading role, in the movement as indicated by the letterhead of the Movimiento Estridentista in which he alone is listed with Maples Arce in the Comité Directivo ‘Committee of Direction’ (Flores 2013: 142). Charlot was surprised when this stationery was found among his papers some years after our interview on the subject. He had forgotten it as much as the long conversations Maples Arce recalled in the quotation below. But Charlot must have had some planning and administrative duties, most likely in publishing. Having a poet and an artist on the Committee of Direction would have reflected the new stage in Estridentismo:

In 1923, however, the artist-writer connections that had existed informally from the beginning began to coalesce into productive collaboration. (Rashkin 2009: 77; also 78)

A practical link would have been Charlot’s woodcuts, which were immediately proclaimed Estridentista and became an important medium in the movement’s publications.¹⁴⁰ That is, woodcuts could be considered both Mexican popular art by the muralists and European avant-garde art by the poets. Evidence is certainly available of Charlot’s important place in Estridentismo. Charlot was named in the first and fourth Estridentista manifestoes (Rashkin 2009: 162; and above). List Arzubide wrote in 1981 that “No es casualidad que mi primer libro de poemas estridentistas ESQUINA” ‘It is not by chance that my first book of Estridentista poems ESQUINA’ was illustrated by Charlot.¹⁴¹ Both he and Maples Arce continued to speak of Charlot as a member of the movement, as seen below. Charlot was also approached for illustrations after he had finished his formal Estridentista prints: “Cueto et Albe de la part de Maples pour publier dessin dans revue et livre sur mouvement estridentista” ‘Cueto and Albe [*sic*: Alva de la Canal] on Maples’ part to publish drawing in revue and book on Estridentista movement’ (Diary September 5, 1926). Rashkin concludes: “Stridentism is almost unthinkable without Charlot’s contribution” (2009: 78). But the biographer feels deprived of sources when trying to specify and measure his non-art contribution.

Charlot did participate in many activities of the Estridentistas, “conviniendo cotidianamente con nosotros” ‘getting together with us daily’ (List Arzubide April 12, 1994). He participated in the famous exhibition at their meeting place, the Café de Nadie, which opened on April 12, 1924.¹⁴² Charlot described the atmosphere of this “lugar de reunión” ‘meeting place’:

Allí se discutía y se tomaba café. Había pinturas expuestas en las paredes, y cuando los pintores no estábamos ocupados con frescos, nos reuníamos allí con los escritores. (Baciu 1968: 70)

‘There we discussed and drank coffee. There were pictures exhibited on the walls, and when we, the painters, were not occupied with frescoes, we reunited there with the writers.’

The artists could become raucous. Revueltas painted a menu:

con la siguiente inscripción: “Merde pour les bourgeois.” ¡Este era el ambiente y el espíritu! ¿Cómo se podría, pues, hablar de cosa organizada?¹⁴³

‘with the following inscription: “Shit for the middle class women.” That was the atmosphere and the spirit! How could one talk then of something organized?’

The one claim Charlot made in regard to poetry—which must be taken seriously because he made so few—is that he introduced Rimbaud and Apollinaire to the Mexican poets.¹⁴⁴ This claim is complicated by the fact Charlot denied it in our interview of June 12, 1971, giving the credit to Rivera as “the bridge between contemporary Parisian literature and the poets”:

I was quite mum about my own literary works and quite mum about what I knew of contemporary French literature. But again, I mean it’s very simple: Rivera wasn’t and he was quite willing to impart his knowledge to people in the same way that he imparted to them his knowledge of Cubism and so on.

Charlot mentioned specifically a *calligramme* that Rivera wrote for an *Estridentista* magazine, but the first Mexican *calligrammes* were written by José Juan Tablada starting in 1915, which raises the question of how knowledgeable the Mexican poets were about modern and contemporary French literature.¹⁴⁵ The Mexican press of the time did contain articles on the latest European literature and art that the Mexican poets could have read.¹⁴⁶ Besides Rimbaud and Apollinaire, many French poets have been claimed as influences on *Estridentismo*: Baudelaire, Lautréamont, Corbière, Mallarmé, Laforgue, and Max Jacob, one of Charlot’s favorites.¹⁴⁷ But Torres Bodet makes clear that knowledge of the French writers after Francis Jammes, Ana de Noailles, Anatole France, and so on, was of recent date (Torres Bodet 1961: 245 f.; also 256, 258 f.). Indeed, Fauchereau suggests that Charlot and Rivera helped Maples Arce with the list of progressive artists for his first manifesto.¹⁴⁸ The availability of information on the latest European art did not insure that it had penetrated the minds of the Mexican artists and been understood or adapted, as seen in their Impressionist preferences. Charlot found the same situation in literature:

There was in Mexico a very intense business about literature and poetry, but most of it was very much like painting, things that were closer to the end of the nineteenth century in intent than what I had known in Paris. In spite of everything, in Paris, being Parisian, I had understood my moment, which was one of great interest, corresponding with the Cubists and so on. And when I went to Mexico, I had physically the feeling that I was suddenly around 1890, and I enjoyed all that. I thought it was wonderful that those people were so disconnected from what was going on in Paris, and I wasn’t thinking at all of being an apostle of what I considered contemporary literature. I just enjoyed all the things they were doing. In the same way, I thought that the Impressionism that they were doing in the 1920s was very good as far as painting goes. There was just an extraordinary *décalage* in time.

(Interview June 12, 1971)

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In view of the above points, I believe a solution is possible. In art, knowing Cubism and post-Cubism from reading is different from seeing originals and observing a practicing artist. The experience of meeting and working with Rivera and Charlot was transformative for the young artists. In the same way, the young poets would have been interested in hearing Rimbaud and Apollinaire read and discussed by a Frenchman familiar with their world. That is, Charlot was fulfilling the same role in literature as in the visual arts. This helps explain Charlot's place on the Committee of Direction of the Movimiento Estridentista: he represented France as Maples Arce represented Mexico.

Charlot did form lasting bonds of friendship with Maples Arce and List Arzubide, whom he considered the two most important Estridentistas (Baciu 1968: 69). Their affection was mutual:

Sus compañeros en la aventura estridentista, List Arzubide y Maples Arce, lo consideraban como a uno de los más fieles—hasta el fin de sus días, y este reconocimiento siempre le daba un placer que ocultaba bajo una sonrisa entre tímida y picaresca [*sic*; picaresca]. (Baciu 1982: 6)

‘His companions in the Estridentist adventure, List Arzubide and Maples Arce, considered him as one of the most faithful—till the end of his days, and this recognition gave him always a pleasure that he hid under a smile that was between timid and picaresque.’

When I asked Alfredo Zalce about Charlot's relation to the poets, he answered:

I just know Jean made engravings and that they were good friends. Some of the poets were my friends, like Arzubide. Always they remember Jean; they talked about him. (July 27–28, 1971)

Maples Arce visited Charlot in Honolulu on his way back from Japan and wrote a newspaper article on his Hawai'i murals and an affectionate memoir after his death:

Moviéndose en aquel grupo, con su talante sereno y pacífico veo a Jean Charlot recién llegado de Francia, su tierra natal. Era un espíritu distinto, pero por su tolerancia, su fino humanismo y su amplitud de visión, armonizaba con los demás. Como un sueño oigo la palabra suave de mi amigo, su reflexión justa y medida, su comprensión humana. Nuestros paseos por las calles del viejo México y sus cafés en que exaltados por proyectos y nuestra propia juventud sosteníamos horas interminables de plática. Un espíritu religioso trascendía del alma de Charlot conciliado con su obra pictórica de tan alto sentido moral.

Cuando el destino volvió a reunirnos en Honolulu durante mi misión diplomática al Japón para establecer la primera embajada de México, me enseñó los tesoros de su pintura mural, como un mito perdido en aquellas islas ceñidas por el Pacífico azul. Charlot era el mismo hombre tranquilo, de agudo ingenio, amante de la creación y del ser interior, un fino espíritu, un hombre de clara verdad. ¹⁴⁹

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‘Moving in that group [of artists and muralists] in his serene and pacific way, I saw Jean Charlot recently arrived from France, his native land. He was a distinctive spirit but, through his tolerance, fine humanism and his amplitude of vision, harmonized with the rest.

As if in a dream I hear the suave conversation of my friend, his just and measured reflection, his human comprehension. Our walks in the streets of old Mexico City and its cafés in which, exalted by plans and our own youth, we kept up interminable hours of talk. A religious spirit rose from Charlot’s soul connected to his pictorial work of such high moral feeling.

When destiny turned to reunite us in Honolulu during my diplomatic mission to Japan to establish the first Mexican embassy, he showed me the treasures of his mural painting, like a myth lost in those islands encircled by the blue Pacific. Charlot was the same tranquil person, of acute intelligence, lover of creation and the interior life, a fine spirit, a man of clear truth.’

On September 7, 1982, the art scholar Serge Fauchereau wrote Zohmah Charlot:

Three years ago when I told Manuel Maple [sic] Arce I’d like to write about Jean charlot [sic], he urged me to do so and told me how Charlot’s research was important to him and his friends of the estridentista [sic] movement.

Germán List Arzubide dedicated a copy of his *El Movimiento Estridentista* (1927) to Charlot with the words:

Para Jean Charlot intenso trabajador, gran artista, mejor amigo, en recuerdo de nuestros días de lucha en conjunto

cariñosamente.

germán list arzubide

Jalapa, 927

‘For Jean Charlot, intense worker, great artist, best friend, in remembrance of our days

of joint struggle

affectionately

germán list arzubide

Jalapa, 1927

When I met the poet in 1992, he spoke with affectionate admiration of my father—calling him repeatedly “*muy sano*” ‘very sound’—and gave me a reprint of the same book “en recuerdo de su padre Jean que fue tan amigo del ESTRIDENTISMO” ‘in memory of his father, Jean, who was such a friend of ESTRIDENTISMO.’ He wrote me on September 15, 1992, calling my father “el gran pintor y gran amigo mío” ‘the great painter and great friend of mine’¹⁵⁰ and described:

el afecto—que nos tuvimos en el tiempo en que estuvimos unidos dentro de la lucha poética que representó el ESTRIDENTISMO, en la vida de Jean en el transcurso de su estancia en México.

‘the affection that we had in the time when we were united in the poetic struggle that Estridentismo represented, in the life of Jean in the course of his stay in Mexico.’

List Arzubide closed with a personal statement that I treasure:

Deseo que usted sepa que su visita a mi casa, renovó una época de afectos juveniles que alimentan recuerdos gloriosos. Cuantas cosas que soñábamos en los días que hoy miramos lejos, regresaron a mí con el mismo fervor de aquellos días que encuentro en el retrato juvenil que su padre me hizo y que he aprovechado para hacer resaltar el íntimo contacto que tuvimos los entonces [*sic*] muchachos de México con la juventud de Francia.

‘I want you to know that your visit to my home renewed an epoch of youthful affections that are nourished by glorious memories. How many things that we dreamed in those days—that we see as far away today—return to me with the same fervor of those days that I encounter in the youthful portrait that your father made for me and that I have used to bring out the intimate contact we had, the young friends of that period with the youth of France.’

After my father’s death, List Arzubide wrote a letter to Stefan Baciu for his memorial volume

Fue un gran amigo, adicto, servicial, convencido de nuestro empeño. Con el mismo fervor que ilustró mi libro lo iba a hacer con URBE de Manuel Maples Arce y todo generosamente, abiertamente, entregado amistosamente a sus amigos mexicanos con los que se sintió siempre fielmente adherido. (May 11, 1981: 74)

‘He was a great friend, devoted, serviceable, convinced of our commitment. With the same fervor that he illustrated my book, he did the same with Manuel Maples Arce’s *URBE*—and all generously, openly, integrated amicably with his Mexican friends to whom he felt himself always faithfully joined.’

For the same volume, List Arzubide wrote the poem *A Jean Charlot, en Hawaii al cumplir sus ochenta años* ‘*For Jean Charlot in Hawai‘i on completing his eightieth year*’ (1981). Charlot died at seventy-nine, but the title is not a mistake. It is a true Estridentismo:

que el cariño

REGRESA CADA DÍA

that affection

RETURNS EVERY DAY

As List Arzubide wrote much later:

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ni tiempo ni distancia lograron disminuir ese afecto que los dos establecimos a los 23 años de edad. (April 12, 1994)

‘neither time nor distance succeeded in diminishing this affection that the two of us established at twenty-three years of age.’

When List met my brother Martin at my father’s 1994 retrospective in Mexico City, he told him three times that “Your father was my best friend” (personal communication).

The major witness to Charlot’s relations with the Estridentistas is the quantity and quality of the visual art he created for them, while his work was almost exclusively textual with the Contemporáneos.¹⁵¹ List Arzubide even saw a parity with his mural work:

Al mismo tiempo que durante el día pinta sus murales, por la noche ilustra primero el libro de poemas **Urbe** de Maples arce y luego **Esquina** de Germán List Arzubide. (April 12, 1994)

‘At the same time that he painted his murals during the day, at night he illustrated first the book of poems *URBE* of Maples Arce and then *Esquina* of Germán List Arzubide.’

The Cubistic works can be traced back to Charlot’s Cubist work in France, like his two gouaches, *Bullet* and *Music*, and his analytical drawings of nudes (Volume 1, Chapter 8, Section 3.1.1). But *URBE* is unprecedented in his work, and as far as I can see, anywhere. Charlot “got in the mood” (M57).

Charlot recognized the difference of his Estridentista work from his normal production. He explained it—as he did his later collaboration with Paul Claudel—as an act of friendship: he changed his art at the request of writer friends.¹⁵² Also, with the exception of *Mental Portrait of Maples Arce*, his first Estridentista print, he was illustrating finished texts rather than collaborating equally with a writer like Gutiérrez Cruz: “The idea was a collaboration, which it wasn’t with the Estridentistas—not a true collaboration; it was just a gesture on our part for friends.”¹⁵³ However, the exception of the *Mental Portrait* and the singularity of the *URBE* illustrations warrant a comparison with Charlot’s descriptions of his work with Claudel:

And I worked with Claudel very closely on those illustrations for the *Apocalypse*, and those who know my work, of course, realize that I was a sort of a mouthpiece. I shouldn’t say mouthpiece because I wasn’t talking, I was drawing. But the illustrations are done under the really very strict surveillance and very exact detailed instructions of Claudel. (Interview November 25, 1970)

It was a question of complete collaboration; that is, Claudel would tell me, of course, in words exactly what he was thinking, what he would want. Sometimes he would sketch. I showed you a few of the sketches he made to make his words more visual. And I would send him sketches. He would reject some of them. There is a number of drawings that I had made that were rejected by him.

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the drawings are not really mine. I'm sort of a mouthpiece or handpiece for Claudel, who was a man that was very visual. He liked to translate things in visions, shall we say. And people who know my work, who can compare that series on the *Apocalypse* with my own work know very well that I was working with him and that there is more Claudel than Charlot in those drawings. So it would be worth a study of the drawings as an original, shall we say unpublished work by Claudel, and I think there would be very rich rewards.

Well, that's about the same thing that I have been saying now. It was interesting because it forced both of us a little bit outside of our limitations, And I was forced into more, shall we say lyricism than I would have on my own, and Claudel perhaps was forced into more solidity of plastic, of art than he would have otherwise.

(Interview November 28, 1970)

But for me it was interesting because I could add my experience of draftsmanship to his vision, and all through the *Apocalypse*, the thing is a collaboration, not just a *littérateur* saying something to a draftsman, but a man who, if he had had the experience, could have done the drawings himself. It's what I was saying that those drawings are not mine in a sense because I was acting nearly as a medium with the spirit of Claudel passing through me. And they are not automatic writing, but they are something similar. It is the spirit of Claudel translated into my own mind. (Interview December 1, 1970)

The same process seems to have been at work with Maples Arce:

I did one of the very few what we could call pure abstract or psychological abstract things that I did—because in my early days I had Cubist things that could be considered abstract—but that one was a psychological portrait of Maples Arce. He had asked me specifically to do it that way so we have in there some broken lines, some letters of the alphabet with his name scattered over, so on and so forth.¹⁵⁴

Maples Arce requested the portrait and specified the general style and probably the broken lines and scattered letters of his name. Charlot had to enter into the poet's thinking to understand and visualize what Maples Arce desired. I argue that he described what he found in his 1968 interview with Stefan Baciu. Because of the Mexican distance from Europe and the inadequate understanding of contemporary art:

reinaba cierto desconcierto que hacía, por ejemplo, que el futurismo se confundiese con el cubismo. Esto es, la gente era futurista, pero al mismo tiempo quería ser o se decía cubista, enredando ambos términos. (Baciu 1968: 69)

'a certain confusion reigned that caused, for example, Futurism to be confounded with Cubism. That is, the people were Futurist, but at the same time wanted to be or called themselves Cubists, entangling the two terms.'

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Mental Portrait and the cover of *URBE* contain typical Futurist subjects: buildings, trains, search lights, smokestacks, and so on.¹⁵⁵ But they are not unified by a Futurist flow of energy but organized in a geometric grid: “Pero debo manifestar que jamás me consideré pintor futurista” ‘But I must make clear that I never considered myself a Futurist painter’ (Baciu 1968: 70). Nor is the geometric grid purely or completely Cubist in terms of Charlot’s work in France: “in my early days I had Cubist things that could be considered abstract” (Interview June 12, 1971). The two most comparable Cubist or Planist works, the gouaches *Bullet* and *Music* of late 1921, exhibit clear differences from as well as similarities to *Mental Portrait*.¹⁵⁶ First, in the Mexican work, lines do not create planes but act as foreground dividers of a three-dimensional background. Charlot is expanding this almost anti-Cubist device from two small sections of *Music*. Moreover, the lines in the print have a breadth and independence of objects that reifies them in themselves; the geometric grid itself thus becomes an object, not merely an organizational or analytical device. I believe List Arzubide is referring to this effect when he calls this method Charlot’s “Serenidad disgregada de la línea” ‘The disintegrated (or disaggregated) serenity of line’ (Schneider 1970: 86). That is, the lines have been pulled loose from their normal, two-dimensional moorings and been recreated as an innovative, three-dimensional compositional device.

Charlot is also continuing the use of comparatively realistic ideographs he developed in France, although they are less flattened and stylized. However, in the *Esquina* cover, the stick figures of the running man and dog would be out of place in a purely Cubist composition. An addition to this repertoire is the use of detached elements of Maples Arce’s face—again comparatively realistic and not Cubistically analyzed—which identify the subject of the print and enable the viewer to place its elements, as seen below. The *Mental Portrait* is filled with objects that can be interpreted as symbols, as ideographs, or as actual objects used in Maples Arce’s life and work. Charlot’s difference from much contemporary modernism is that he treats such objects not as elements of a still-life or stylistic exercise but to communicate a message, the basic difference between Charlot’s work and art-for-art.

Although Charlot was adopting an overtly modernist style as a favor for his friends, the task offered him the opportunity to create his own version of such a style, one imbued with his own long-time artistic concerns: message in *Mental Portrait* and narrative in the *Esquina* cover. Charlot was also serious about creating a true portrait of Maples Arce. Flores finds it expressive of its subject:

The effect achieved is similar to that of reading Maples Arce’s prose, which, with its dizzying rhythms, convoluted phrasing, and invented words, depends on a fully engaged reader. (2013: 180)

Charlot’s print is a true *mental* portrait because it expresses stylistically the poet’s vision of modern art: an amalgam of Futurism, Cubism, and disintegration—Maples Arce’s own Futuristico-Cubisticismo.

As seen above, *Mental Portrait* should be considered partially against Charlot’s previous work, including his more orthodox print analyses of El Greco (M38, 39). The surface of *Mental Portrait* is largely articulated in the negative/positive manner of the ideograph of the skull or death’s head in *Bullet*, which Charlot used also in *Massacre*: one side of an object is black and the other white. This can be seen in Maples Arce’s eye, in the bow or handle of the key under his mouth, and in the intersections of lines

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and areas. This negative/positive echoes the opposition between the poet's perception and celebration and the world onto which he imposes his creative vision. Charlot will use the background lines to express an active force as he had in his earliest Mexico woodcuts, as seen above. Negative and positive, black and white, do, however, work together, as seen in the central bottom section: a sprocketed film strip passes before a projector lamp and is caught at the exact instant between two images when the screen flickers imperceptibly black. Film uses black and white both simultaneously—creating an image like a woodcut—and sequentially—creating a *moving* picture. Traditional and modern means of creation are thus joined. Charlot had been interested in cinema since childhood and in Mexico was watching movies often with his mother and friends. For instance, they shared with List Arzubide a love of Charlie Chaplin (List Arzubide 1927: 80). A vivid dream on Aristide Martel's death used a cinematic technique:

enfin changement mort Aristide en ma mort (changement du masque seul) inspiré
évidemment par ces changements à vue du ciné. (1918/1923 Notebook C: I. "Rêve")
'change of Aristide's death into my death (change only of mask), inspired evidently
by these changes of view of cinema.'

The two anatomical details—eye and mouth—orient the viewer's placement of the print's elements: above the eye are the poet's brain and around and below the mouth is the world he addresses. The print uses this placement to describe Maples Arce's creative process. In the top left corner are wavy lines that have come through the poet's ear and entered his brain. Just such lines were used by Charlot in *Music* to depict sound waves. In the early 1920s, radio was expanding in Mexico and enthusing the Estridentistas and other artists as an example of modernity. The title of the Estridentista journal *Irradiador* refers to radio (Gallo 2005: 123/126). Maples Arce in particular emphasized radio as evidence of modernity: "el espíritu de la época...era el de la radiophonía" 'the spirit of the time...was that of radio diffusion' (Rovira 1955: 153). His first book, *Andamios interiores* of 1922 had the subtitle: *Poemas radiográficos* 'Radiographic Poems,' and he later published and read over the air a poem about radio (Rovira 1955: 151, 153). Charlot had been a radio operator during World War I and was knowledgeable about radio waves. The wavy lines thus represent the physical stimuli received by the brain.

In the opposite corner, two searchlights shine down from the brain area above where the other eye would be. The lights show the active searching of the mind, using the Classical idea that sight is the result of light emanating from the eye and illuminating objects. The eye illuminates the object but according to the mind. Also the searchlights are acting as projectors, imposing the brain's process on the outward reality just as the movie projector shines its image on the blank screen. The subtitle of *Irradiador* was "Proyector Internacional de Nueva Estética" 'International Projector of New Esthetics.'

Between the waves and the searchlights is a tube descending from the brow or brain area down to the level of the mouth. The tube is twisted so as to show both its gated top and bottom with opened gate. (Charlot used this twist in the Ministry shield *San Luis Potosí* and in his 1925 oil CL 82 *Still-life with dice*). The tube is thus a conduit between the brain—inaccessible except to the poet—and the mouth through which the brain delivers its content. The tube is a simplified depiction of *la poste pneumatique* 'the pneumatic post,' a system used in Paris from 1866 to 1984 to deliver postal items—pneumatic

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dispatches, pneumatiques, pneumatograms, pneumatographs, etc.—propelled by pneumatic pressure through tubes to post offices (private systems were used in businesses). Odette, Charlot's sister, used the system regularly when I knew her in the 1950s and 1960s. The tube follows the same angle as the nose in Charlot's *URBE* portrait of Maples Arce (M58), but is connected more with the mouth. The "real" mouth is locked with a cabinet key leaving the tube as the only conduit from the brain. Poetry differs from ordinary talk.

With the *pneumatique*, Charlot is using an antique example of modernity just as he includes a passenger balloon in the *Skyscrapers* illustration of *URBE* (M59), discussed below. Charlot once said that our modern world is full of old-fashioned elements, like airports based on train stations. We think we are living in the modern world, but most of the things we live with are already antiquated. Charlot often used children to represent the next generations or the future. With the *pneumatique* and the balloon, he used older technology to represent the past, the development that has led to the present stage. This is the temporal analog of the expansion of the pictorial space by the classical device of indicating an object beyond the frame, like an elbow, that the viewer completes mentally. An example among many is the Maya builder standing in a hole at the bottom of the image, suggesting another level of space (M83, 93).

The top section of *Mental Portrait* describes the creative process of the poet: external stimuli are processed in the brain. The bottom section describes the next step: the result is projected outwards and imposed on the world. At the top right corner, the searchlights push against three diagonal lines that stepwise, bending outwards in a fan motion, become more diagonal, ending in the complete straight diagonal from MA to L. These lines are independent of other objects; that is, they are parts of the reified grid, the "broken lines" Charlot mentions above. The lines are expressive: the poet is imposing himself on the world. He is forming and then signing it, as it were, with his own name. The M and P also push against the complete diagonal, and other letters of the poet's name have occupied sites in the lower section. Before being pushed, the complete diagonal was a horizontal, supported vertically by what is now the film-strip diagonal descending from P (a film strip would normally run vertically through a projector). A thin prop to the left appears inadequate to stop the process. A straight, geometric world—exemplified by the proto-*URBE* building in the bottom left corner—is being crushed by the waves of poetic energy. Charlot expresses in visual terms that Futurism was the biggest influence on Estridentismo.

List Arzubide's 1923 *Esquina: Poemas de Germán List Arzubide* was Charlot's next Estridentista project, for which he created the lithograph portrait for the frontispiece, discussed above, and the woodcut cover (M46, 47). *Esquina: Cover* as well as *URBE: Cover* (M57) are in black and red, anticipating the use of those colors in *El Machete*, founded in 1924, and a number of covers of leftist political books.¹⁵⁷ At the time, black and red were also normal colors for duotone process prints like Norman Rockwell's early covers for *The Saturday Evening Post*.

Esquina: Cover continues the style I have described in *Mental Portrait*: Futurist subjects—apparent smokestacks, buildings—in a Cubistic design with realistic elements.¹⁵⁸ The key difference is that the clearest realistic elements are the complete stick figures of the running man and dog as opposed

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to the *disintegrated* eye and mouth of the *Mental Portrait*. Charlot had used stick figures normally in his childhood and used one to identify the child artist in his September 10, 1921, pencil and wash on paper, *Garden Park with Blue Chair* (Volume 1, Chapter 8, Section 3.1). In Hawai'i, he would be inspired by the stick figures of Hawaiian petroglyphs. Such figures represented for him the earliest or childhood means of depiction and also the minimum needed for a recognizable object. Stick figures were thus important for his understanding of the psychology of the artist and the viewer. The use of such figures belongs also to Charlot's project of adapting into high art devices from folk and other types of art.

The use of the two stick figures has important consequences for the way the viewer understands the print. Because the viewer is accustomed to realism, his eye goes first to the stick figures, which he understands immediately. That is, the eye first takes in what it recognizes best—what is visually familiar, no matter the size—and that element then becomes the key to understanding the rest of the image. Because they are wholes, the stick figures cannot be as easily integrated into the background design as the eye and mouth of *Mental Portrait*. They are thus understood as foreground figures while the rest of the print is read as the background or the real context of the figures.

Moreover, since the viewer's mind habitually searches for consistency and the stick figures are stylistically realistic, the viewer understands the background as realistic as well. The style of the figures is the standard by which the rest of the print is viewed and understood. In a similar way, the realistic eye and mouth of *Mental Portrait* enable the viewer to place the other elements of the print in their meaningful context. Charlot is exploiting the viewer's perception of a multi-styled image: one style is used to understand the others. Orozco used the same device in his 1926 mural *Destruction of the Old Order*.¹⁵⁹

How does the viewer understand the print as a realistic rather than a stylized image? What could be happening that would produce a Futurist-Cubistic cityscape? A man and a dog are running in obvious panic. The white grid of a building at top center gives the normal true verticals and horizontals. But the building at the bottom left is tipping dangerously and its side windows billow flame and smoke. These and other elements discussed below belong to a disastrous earthquake. List Arzubide wanted a style and he got a catastrophe.

Charlot was always interested in the distance between natural objects and thinking and representation. He told the story of a man who fell so in love with a Greek marble statue at the Louvre that he prayed every night that she would come to visit him. One morning, his neighbors awoke to find the stairs to his apartment in splinters and, inside, his crushed body lying amidst the fragments of his bed. "If you imagine artworks as natural objects," Charlot once told me, "they would be monsters." Denis wrote that women who seem beautiful in a picture would be terrible in real life (1912: 37).

Mexico City has suffered terrible earthquakes and subsidence, which have left whole streets twisted and sagging. But Charlot has used, I argue, images of the great earthquake of Lisbon on October 31, 1755, which inspired a wide debate on the Christian teaching of God's benevolent providence, a controversy that added to the intellectual revolution of the time (Shrady 2008). The largely Medieval city had been destroyed and was reconstructed according to the best city planning of the Enlightenment. The

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reference is, therefore, to an event that changed people's thinking and acting just as the Estridentistas wished to do with their work, including building modern facilities for urban centers. The deluge, like the Revolution, had opened the way to Reconstruction. Charlot has transformed stylistic distortion into realistic narrative.

The Lisbon earthquake was depicted in numerous artworks from high to folk. The one that seems most important for Charlot is a frontispiece engraving of Georg Ludwig Hartwig's *Volcanoes and Earthquakes: A Popular Description of the Movements in the Earth's Crust* (1887). The seashore line of buildings is tipping as chaotically as any Futurist work. The second building on the right is tipping at the same angle as Charlot's building at the right bottom. A large central building is still upright and intact like Charlot's at top center. Charlot's three shelves in the middle of the image echo the three descending levels of the broad esplanade-like quays between the buildings and the sea. Windows blaze with interior fire, like Charlot's red ones; the windows on the still vertical building at top center are darker. Flames are coming out of buildings, represented by the leaf shape emerging from a window of Charlot's. Smoke and dust clouds billow into the sky in the shape of the smoke emerging below Charlot's lick of flame. The human danger is indicated in the engraving by the black silhouette of a small human figure on the balcony of the collapsing building at the right edge; Charlot has used this very silhouette for the figure that appears at the window of his building on the right bottom. In the engraving, small figures of people are running from the flames, their darkened shapes resembling Charlot's stick figures. The front leg of a central figure has a squared angle like Charlot's, as do others; a number of figures raise their arms. Frantic horses are replaced by Charlot's dog. People and animals are seeking refuge on the shore but are met by a twenty-foot tsunami coming in from the left of the image.

On the left of *Esquina: Cover*, are what seem to be three smokestacks pouring out streams of smoke, a Futurist subject. But the image, a visual pun, can also be read as the tsunami pouring down on the shore. The fact that the force of the water is moving down from left to right—rather than the smoke rising from right to left—is shown by a device Charlot used in the 1922 woodcut *Trinidad* (M28), discussed above: the image has been pushed away from the left edge of the print, leaving a blank spot. The smokestack pun may have been suggested by the square, hollow tower on the shore of the engraving a little above the bottom center, the remains of the seawall of the foreground quay. Two rounded and two square towers are set in the highest quay wall further in the background. In *Esquina: Cover*, following the downward direction of the tsunami waves, a barbed dart or spear strikes like lightning into the center of the image. This object is a stylized elongation of Zeus's winged thunderbolt from Classical iconography and represents the force of the earthquake.

Other depictions of the earthquake may have been used by Charlot as well, and Posada depicted a number of earthquakes and floods. *Esquina: Cover* is a product of Charlot's view after World War I that analytical Cubism was better able to depict violence and anguish than peace and joy, as seen in the difference between his *Bullet* and *Music*. Just as in the *URBE* illustrations, the tiny human being is trapped in a man-made world suddenly revealed as dangerous.

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Esquina: Cover contains elements Charlot has used before. As in *Mental Portrait*, a diagonal descending from right to left is pushed down, in this case, by the thunderbolt. Like the *pneumatique*, the “smokestacks” are twisted to show their openings. A cross-like shape pushes down from the top right corner—perhaps representing the interior streets of the city—just as a similar shape pushed up from the bottom left corner in *Bullet*. A new element is Charlot’s exploration of different levels of realism and stylization, a subject raised immediately by his stick figures. In *Garden Park with Blue Chair* of 1921, Charlot had already contrasted the child artist’s stick figure with the comparatively realistic profiles of the hunter and his dog in the background. On a spectrum from realistic to more stylized, I place the elements of *Esquina: Cover* thus:

stick figures and silhouette → buildings → flame and smoke → shelves/quays → the arrow-shaped force of the earthquake (a Classical stylization extended)

I have left out the smokestacks/tsunami pun. That Charlot creates a visual unity with such disparate elements is an achievement. Moreover, just as with the *Mental Portrait of Maples Arce*, he has absorbed the project into his own tendencies: by making the subject an earthquake, he has transformed all the “distortions” from style to narrative. Narrative will be central in Charlot’s Estridentist illustrations for *URBE*.

URBE was a larger project than *Esquina* because it added illustrations to a cover and portrait frontispiece. As such, the problems of a full coordination between text and visual arts arose, which were at the center of the earlier European revival of book illustration.¹⁶⁰ Charlot was aware of the esthetic problems involved, for instance:

si cette technique [xylographie] semble être la plus d'accord avec un texte (car texte et gravure peuvent s'imprimer du même coup), les noirs dominants de la gravure, si elle est traitée comme il fut de mode alors, très largement, déséquilibrent la finesse des noirs et blancs du texte. (1924–1925)

‘if this technique [woodcut] seems to be the most appropriate for a text (because text and engraving can be printed at the same time), the dominating blacks of the engraving, if treated as was fashionable then—very largely—unbalances the finesse of the blacks and whites of the text.’

Charlot was thus prepared to create a modern illustrated book, as has been recognized:

His book *Urbe* a poetry book illustrated with six woodcuts by Jean Charlot is one of the first books published in Mexico that I have found using the modern techniques of books arts.¹⁶¹

Maples Arce asked Charlot to illustrate *URBE*, but Charlot did not follow the poet’s fantasy of modern art, as earlier:

I think there I managed both to do something that would please him—that is, that would look to him Estridentistas, which was his style—and at the same time to use

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woodcut, wood carving in a very simple folksy way without false complications. I like very much that series of woodcuts, not because they are modern in the sense that Maples would have said they were modern, but in the sense that they are so logical in cutting the wood. (June 12, 1971)

Charlot was following in the tradition of the earlier book revival that the illustrations should be “non un accessoire, mais un tout en soi” ‘not an accessory but a whole in itself.’¹⁶² Yet there are passages in *URBE* that must have touched Charlot:

Y las artillerías
sonoras del atlántico
se apagaron,

al fin,

en la distancia. (Canto 4)

‘And the sonorous
artilleries of the Atlantic
fade
finally
in the distance.’

The partial independence of the illustrations from the text means that they cannot be interpreted entirely from the poem itself, but must be considered in their own right: “the relationship between text and image becomes looser, forcing the reader to ponder possible meanings” (Flores 2013: 187); “these images are not illustrations, but rather an independent visual narrative complementing the poem” (Rashkin 2009: 120). The resulting differences in interpretation reveal how suggestive those illustrations are.¹⁶³

The cover of *URBE* is the only two-color print of the book: aggressive red and black like *Esquina: Cover*. Charlot plays with the lettering of Maples Arce’s name as he did in *Mental Portrait*, displaying his life-long interest in typography, as seen in his childhood work and French ex libris. *MAPLES* and *ARCE* share A and E. Charlot divides the name into three bands: the top for MPLS, the bottom for RC, and the middle for the shared A and E. (In *Mental Portrait*, the A can be viewed as shared, but not the E.) Black circles occupy the otherwise blank bottom spaces und M and S. If those circles are read as wheels (Rashkin 2009: 120), the poet’s name assumes the profile of a luxury car with a chauffeur’s cab and a high back seat for the distinguished passengers. Such cars appear conveying politicians in the photographs of the time. Note that there are also three bands of lettering on the cover: author’s name, title, and subtitle + place of publication. The whole cover is weighty and solid.

The image on the cover is divided into a top and bottom zone like Charlot’s *Hidalgo* and other shields. The title *URBE* is drawn in thick letters seen from below. The letters lie on the lower zone,

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which must, therefore, be sloping upwards away from the viewer like the corresponding ground in *Hidalgo*. Again like shields, the space of the entire image is not consistent: the viewer looks straight at the buildings but up at the title below them. The buildings are true verticals and horizontals, but the inconsistent space and forceful up and down rhythm of the title's lettering threaten underground upheavals. In later illustrations, buildings will tilt like those of *Esquina: Cover*.

In M57–63, Charlot used the titles from his 1936 *Catalogue of Prints* (Morse 1976: 195) and provided the clue for their interpretation: “They represented for me various kinds of farewell” (M57). The theme is indeed used several times in *URBE*:

Oh ciudad internacional,
¿hacia qué remoto meridiano
cortó aquel trasatlántico?

Yo siento que se aleja todo. (Canto 1)

‘O international city,
towards which remote meridian
cuts that transatlantic steamer?
I feel everything distancing itself.

se cuelgan los adioses de las máquinas. (Canto 3)

‘The farewells of the machines hang themselves up.’

y el grito, lejano
de un vapor,
hacia los mares nórdicos:

Adios
al continente naufragado. (Canto 5)

‘and the cry, distant
of a steamer
bound for Nordic seas:

Farewell
to the shipwrecked continent.’

Charlot does not match or confine each illustration to its attached text but can be inspired by passages from any of the cantos.

Skyscrapers (M59) begins the series as one of the more recognizable and understandable images. The two skyscrapers are set at an angle so that their square tops look pyramidal and literally scrape their

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pinnacles off against the top edge of the print. The light comes realistically and thus reassuringly from a single source to the left of the image, making the faces and backs of the buildings alternate between light and dark. At their bases swarm herds of inhabitants reduced to light dots for faces and four or five stick figures.¹⁶⁴ The impression has been well described: “contrast the vulnerability of the human being with the enormity of the built environment” (Rashkin 2009: 79); “a bleak view of modern life...how technology dwarfs the individual” (Flores 2013: 185).

In the late 1950s, while visiting a Frank Lloyd Wright house with my father, he called my attention to the details of a glass partition in the living room. He said that Wright always included such small details so that the human being could establish his own scale and not be overwhelmed by the greater size of the house. In *Skyscrapers*, human beings are the smallest visible objects, the very bottom of the scale spectrum. In the distance, between the two skyscrapers, a line of much lower buildings represents the old city now being replaced. The old city had a more human scale—like the villages and plazas Charlot depicted often—but its ground is now tipping as if pushed down by the new constructions.

The point of view of the print can be determined from the white, horizontal lines of the floors of the skyscrapers. On the right skyscraper, the viewer looks down on lines one to seventeen from the bottom. A half line marks the eye level, and the viewer looks up at all the remaining floors. On the left skyscraper, the point of view is higher, at the twenty-first line from the bottom. That is, the viewer rises several levels as his eye switches from the right building to the left.

This ascension mimics that of the hot-air balloon levitating away from the buildings in farewell. Just like the *pneumatique* in *Mental Portrait*, Charlot is using an antique modernism in dialogue with contemporary.¹⁶⁵ He does not want an airplane, which would repeat that of the next illustration, *Poet on Airplane* (M60). Moreover, passenger balloons were a childhood enthusiasm of Charlot's along with fixed-wing aircraft. In 1909, he had published with friends a newsletter on aviation, *Les Aïrs*, which provided current news of winged aircraft along with a history of aviation (Volume 1, Chapter 3, Section 5). An illustration of a dirigible from the front resembles the balloon in *Skyscrapers*. Balloons and early aircraft had thus been objects of Charlot's adventurous imagination, and he could remember nostalgically those earlier modernities and technical advances. They now combined for him modernity with the poetic imagination, whereas the actual modern city could not be an object of fantasy. The balloon—palpably buoyant in the pressure of air—takes the artist away from the city into poetic space. Moreover, such antique modernisms provide perspective: today's novelties feed tomorrow's nostalgia.

Poet on Airplane has a clear farewell. As he flies away in the cockpit of an airplane, the poet holds his lyre in one hand and waves goodbye with his other to his winged horse, Pegasus, Classical symbol of poetry. The poet flies now on the airplane of modern inspiration:

Un pájaro de acero
ha emporado su norte hacia una estrella. (Canto 2)

‘A bird of steel
has raised its North towards a star.’¹⁶⁶

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The poet has found a new vessel of inspiration—a new form of elevation and exaltation—next to which even Pegasus seems earthbound:

Oh ciudad toda tensa
de cables y de esfuerzos
sonora toda
de motores y de alas. (Canto 1)

‘Oh city all taut
with cables and powers
All resounding
with motors and wings.’

The view out the airplane window is modern, the world tipping as easily as the wings. Charlot was fascinated by such new visuals:

De même, dans une automobile lancée, la route et le décor s'effacent—ne compte que la matière portée à votre vitesse.¹⁶⁷

‘In the same way, in a fast car, the route and the background blur—and only the material carried at your speed counts.’

Poet and Pegasus seem archaically cursive and vulnerable against the heavy black areas of ground, buildings, and airplane. But they are also the only upright figures.

In *Viaduct*, a young woman in a modern short skirt waves goodbye with her white handkerchief to a train passing quickly over a tall, arcaded bridge.¹⁶⁸

Trenes espectrales que van

hacia allá

lejos, jadeantes de civilizaciones. (Canto 1)
‘Spectral trains that go
towards there
distant, puffing with civilizations.’

Y estos trenes que aullan
hacia los horizontes devastados. (Canto 4)
‘And those trains that howl
towards devastated horizons.’

The distance from and speed of the train make her tiny gesture poignantly hopeful:

alguna novia blanca
se deshoja. (Canto 3)

some pale fiancée
loses her leaves.’

Bridges are usually imagined as joining places and people, but this bridge does not connect: it provides the means of separation. The great machine seems to carry all irrevocably away, distancing people quickly and easily. The woman stands on a hillside, separated from the city by the great cleft the bridge crosses. The buildings tilt inward—echoing the hillside—whether by distortion, perspective, or an odd optical effect behind the arcade. Even their solidity bends to the effects of vision and emotion.

In *Searchlights* (M62), two ocean vessels pass each other along a mountain coast. From the shore and the two side edges of the print, searchlights cross each other as they probe the sky. The scene is viewed from the half-circle of an empty gun emplacement above the water on the foreground shore. The water is the only true horizontal in the interior illustrations, spreading a deceptive calm. At the time of the print’s creation, searchlights were used almost exclusively in warfare, and Charlot used two searchlights in *Bullet* as ideographs of his experience in World War I. The eye-searchlight in *Mental Portrait* was also aggressive. Here the searchlights of the port are on the lookout for enemy aircraft. As the background ship enters the harbor, it turns on its light. As the foreground ship steals out towards the ocean, it imposes a blackout. In World War I, the danger to ships was not airplanes, but submarines. The canto that *Searchlights* illustrates is devoted to “social agitation and war” (Flores 2013: 187). The print depicts wartime shipping as one ship heads perhaps to America and the other returns to Europe, deadly journeys that merit a “Farewell.” In the words of Kurt Vonnegut, “It is never a mistake to say goodbye.”

The final illustration, *Ocean Liner* (M63), depicts the ultimate goodbye: suicide.

Un adios trasatlántico saltó desde la borda. (Canto 2)
‘A transatlantic farewell jumped overboard.’

A young man and woman—again in a short skirt—have thrown themselves off the prow of a passenger ship into the water. That they fall headfirst shows the act was deliberate, and that they are close together, that they have jumped at the same time. The boat would be a pleasure liner, but it looms ominously as it steams into a city harbor. A building on the shore curves up and downward like the chest, shoulders, and head of some threat. The boat itself—with its unrealistically placed smokestacks—seems to replicate the gesture. The water heaves up to a slight diagonal that corresponds to the surge of the boat; the water line tips when seen from a boat just as buildings do when seen from an airplane. A passenger ship is like an enclosed world, and pushed by the waves and menaced by the ship and buildings, the young couple felt that neither the constructions of the sea nor those of the land provided a place for their love. Some of the print’s imagery and emotion may stem from a dream Charlot reported (19181923 Notebook C: “Rêve,” August 18, 1923). He and his mother are on a small boat that is racing “un type Leviathan” ‘a Leviathan type’ on a free path over an ice-covered sea, whose sheets are raised and cracked by ten-meter waves. Seeing fish in the clear water below him, Charlot dives in and brings up a portfolio and a wallet. The scene changes.

The *URBE* illustrations are stylistically and compositionally unified. For instance, all interior illustrations have one or more pyramid shapes or parts thereof reaching to the sky, representing the

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striving of modernism. *Skyscrapers* has two pyramid-shaped roofs scratching the top edge of the print. The underneath of the airplane in *Poet on Airplane* forms an upward pyramid shape of space, while the ground is the right half of such a shape. The hillside in *Viaduct* and the bridge itself form such a half. The *Searchlights* form a pyramid under their intersection. The bulk of the *Ocean Liner* rounds up in a similar shape reinforced by the tilt of the buildings.

Buildings were a characteristic Futurist subject, usually treated positively: in Charlot's words, a "culto de la máquina y de los rascacielos de las grandes ciudades" 'cult of the machine and the skyscrapers of the big cities' (Baciu 1968: 68). But Charlot depicts them in a massive, non-Futurist style and destabilizes them throughout the book. On the cover, the buildings are true verticals and horizontals and seem solid. But they are threatened by the inconsistent perspective of the zone below them. Similarly, the *Skyscrapers* are vertical, but seem to be depressing the earth with their weight, creating a slant on the built horizon line behind them. In *Poet on Airplane*, the great buildings tip ominously as seen from the airplane. They tip less but unmistakably in *Viaduct* even though the reason is not obvious. In *Ocean Liner*, the buildings rear up and loom ominously and anthropomorphically. Thus the great modern buildings are not privileged with some special gravity, but change like all elements in the universe according to perspective and emotion: "Like Maples Arce's text, Jean Charlot's images convey a profound sense of instability and ambivalence in their portrayal of modernity and modernization" (Rashkin 2009: 120); "modernity encompasses both technological advancements and troubled social conditions" (Flores 2013: 185). Charlot's experience of Mexico City with its growing pains and earthquakes, I argue, contributed to this view. Indeed, Charlot's street sketches and the artworks based on them focused on the human beings subject to the problems of urban growth. As Charlot stated later:

We go back to Mexico with Alfredo Zalce and that very beautiful etching, which is called *Mexico is Becoming a Large City*. It's always hard for a city to grow up, and Mexico has grown up with growing pains. The people have remained the same. It is not a preachment. It is a plea. It is a plea for the people not to think just in terms of cement, of concrete, of skyscrapers, but to make Mexico a bigger city in terms of catering to the humans. After all, a city is made for human beings. (June 9, 1965)

The great, anonymous buildings that now preponderate and oppress human beings could themselves be swept away by larger natural forces, while the plazas and *pueblos*—built with a sense of place and at a human scale—remain.

The style of the *URBE* illustrations is unique in Charlot's work and needs to be explained. Up to now, he had explored the peculiar ideas of List Arzubide and Maples Arce about modern art—developing two "fantasy" styles. Now he balanced his work more evenly between Maples Arce's ideas and his own. I repeat an important text already cited above:

I think there I managed both to do something that would please him—that is, that would look to him Estridentistas, which was his style—and at the same time to use woodcut, wood carving in a very simple folksy way without false complications. I

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like very much that series of woodcuts, not because they are modern in the sense that Maples would have said they were modern, but in the sense that they are so logical in cutting the wood. (Interview June 12, 1971)

Maples Arce would be pleased by the Futurist subjects: the skyscraper city, airplanes, trains, steamboats, and pleasure cruisers. Charlot would be pleased by a more personal style. First, Charlot wanted to revert to the simplicity he was developing in his regular work: “without false complications.” Second, he wanted to return to the source of inspiration he was regularly using in that work: “to use woodcut, wood carving in a very simple folksy way.” Being true to his medium was a principle of his art:

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

‘This rusticity of means reduced woodcut, in those periods called “of full flowering,” to a secondary role, confined to the productions of popular art, while more subtle means were preferred by the “right” people and were the only ones admitted into the portfolio of collectors. About ten years ago, a reaction arose in favor of wood.’

Posada had created wonderful prints of the big city of his day. What would a good folk printmaker make of the world of the 1920s?

The *URBE* illustrations share many characteristics of Charlot’s regular work at the time: strong black areas, geometric composition, and ideographs. Two new elements have made their appearance shortly before *URBE*. The first is the stick figures in *Esquina: Cover* that will be used in *Skyscrapers*, *Poet on Airplane*, *Viaduct*, and *Ocean Liner*, that is, in all but the cover and *Searchlights*. Stick figures are folksy, easy to understand, and clear clues to the narrative or meaning of the print. They are also diminutive, spindly, and fractile, like human beings in front of their monstrous creations. Charlot felt that children’s and folk art had developed visual devices and expressive means that could be used profitably by high art (compare Debroise 1984: 91 ff.).

The second new element is the Futurist subjects included for Maples Arce, subjects new to Charlot’s work and demanding an ideological and social stance. Charlot had been working towards an image of modern buildings in his pre-*URBE* Estridentista prints. In *Mental Portrait*, an *URBE*-type simplification of a building can be seen in the bottom left corner. In *Esquina: Cover*, two such buildings are found: a two-dimensional erect one at the top center and a three-dimensional tilting one at the bottom right. All three of these are gestating into Charlot’s simplification of modern buildings into rectangular, blocky shapes with simple, regular indications of windows. Charlot can render such a building in three dimensions as in *Skyscrapers* but does them elsewhere in two. Charlot may have been influenced by the buildings in prints of the Lisbon earthquake—the folksier the print, the blockier the buildings—as well as those of Posada. But he has pushed the simplification further to the barest minimum needed to create the

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image. He does this also with the other objects in the prints—airplane, viaduct, and ships—sometimes with a strong folk-like or childlike effect. Orozco used Charlot's *URBE* buildings in his 1931 oil *Los Muertos (Skyscrapers)*.

This return to simplicity and woodcut strength released Charlot's fundamental muralism to create the main impression of the *URBE* prints: a threatening monumentality. The massive machines of modern life are not fragmented by style but delivered whole and recognizable. The woodcuts are small, but they seem as big as the city. The viewer feels as small as the stick figures. The poetic text is the squirming of the resisting victim.

The distinctiveness of the *URBE* illustrations is clear from a comparison with the woodcut *The Rich in Hell* (M56), done at the time Charlot was beginning to work on Maples Arce's book. *The Rich in Hell* is sometimes identified as an Estridentista print, but Charlot stated that it was created to illustrate an unpublished and unidentified article of his for *El Machete*.¹⁶⁹ The viewership was, therefore, Charlot's normal one, and he drew strongly on his folk-art sources, like the Images d'Epinal and Posada with his depiction of formal clothing (compare Génin 1908–1910: 109). *The Rich in Hell* is close to Charlot's mainstream style in its geometry; note the trident entering from top left like the thunderbolt of *Esquina: Cover*. The post-Cubist composition is much closer to Charlot's El Greco studies (M38, 39) than to *URBE*. The sources of *The Rich in Hell* can be traced into Charlot's childhood when his fascination with *grand guignol* and the puppet theatres of the Parisian parks inspired him to create elaborate sets for his own plays (Volume 1, Chapter 3, Section 5). *The Rich in Hell* is a box puppet theatre with a foreground of cutout devils, a middle ground of puppets, and a background. In 1911, Charlot built a similar set with a foreground of devil cutouts that were attached so they could be moved together. His younger cousin, Doly Labadie, remembered it well:

pour admirer son chef-d'œuvre, la maquette d'un "enfer" ou les flammes, l'illumination, les petits diables sautants courants dans les plus pittoresques attitudes nous tenaient tous émerveillés. (Labadie to John Charlot December 6, 1980)

'to admire his masterpiece, the model of a "Hell" where the flames, the illumination, the little devils jumping, running, in the most picturesque attitudes held us all amazed.'

The theme of the print is deeply rooted in Charlot's childhood and youth, inculcated by his favorite authors:

Now, behind [Léon] Bloy, there was always the idea that the rich—of course, he based himself on the Gospels—the rich would go to Hell, so that he treated those people as damned. (Interview November 25, 1970)

This idea bound Charlot to his Mexican colleagues:

It is not political, but religious—the eye of the needle. It was a narrow point of contact with the political artists. None of us had much love for the rich. The feeling has stayed with me. (M56)

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As seen in Volume 1, Charlot had experimented with a variety of styles during his French period. In Mexico, a main stylistic trajectory can be established, even in variations like *The Rich in Hell*. But the Estridentista works demonstrate that Charlot always had options that he could have pursued. Instead, he returned to his regular work, which focused on the problems of poor people in modern life and also the model of the good life they provided in their traditions.

A separate question of style is that of the portrait of Maples Arce created for the *URBE* frontispiece. Charlot had done his portrait of List Arzubide, the *Esquina* frontispiece, in the line of the large body of drawn portraits of friends and colleagues he had started in 1922, thereby creating a stylistic gap with the cover. In *URBE*, Charlot avoided that clash by creating a new style for the portrait of Maples Arce, closer to the interior illustrations but still being distinct as is traditional in such frontispieces. The portrait resembles the outline portrait drawings of Luz and others, in which a single, substantial line is used without shading. The Maples Arce line is sufficiently thick to accord with the extensive black areas of the interior illustrations, although those are all delimited by straight lines and the portrait is all curved ones. The difference is that the line in Charlot's other portraits is secure and decided, whereas Charlot introduces a tremolo in his Maples Arce line, which seems soft, fleshy, and sensuous. Charlot was reacting to the youthful pudginess of Maples Arce's face, visible in the photographs of the time. The creation of a soft cursive line in woodcut is unique in Charlot's work and an odd achievement, but one that enabled him to use woodcut for both the portrait frontispiece and the other illustrations, as opposed to the clash between woodcut and lithography in *Esquina*. Charlot also noted the slight angle of Maples Arce's nose, which he gave to the *pneumatique* in *Mental Portrait*. Finally, Charlot bookended the portrait with the last interior illustration, *Ocean Liner*: the poet's brow surges up like the vessel's prow. Like List Arzubide, Maples Arce continued to use this portrait. Stefan Baciu calls the frontispieces "los dos retratos por así decir 'oficiales'" 'the two "official" portraits, so to speak' (1982: 2).

Charlot was pleased with his *URBE* illustrations: "I think they are very good" (Interview June 12, 1971). Maples Arce was delighted:

De uno de mis primeros poemas, *Urbe*, hizo una preciosa edición, que a pesar de la modestia de sus materiales, sigue siendo un modelo de gracia y elegancia. (1982)
 'Of one of my first poems, *URBE*, he made a precious edition, which despite the modesty of its materials, continues to be a model of grace and elegance.'

Cuando reflexiono sobre el desarrollo que el grabado ha tenido en México en las últimas décadas percibo las ilustraciones que Jean Charlot hizo para mi poema *Urbe* (1924), en que trata la madera con gran sencillez y esplendor. Poco antes de su llegada a México había visto en Francia la renovación de la ilustración de libros, a la que contribuyeron Derain, Vlaminck, Laboureur,¹⁷⁰ Dufy y otros. No sería exagerado decir que el joven artista francés estimuló en nuestro país las inquietudes de la ilustración xilográfica. (November 2002)

'When I reflect on the development that print-making had in Mexico in the last decades, I note the illustrations that Jean Charlot made for my poem *Urbe* (1924), in

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which he treats woodcuts with great sensitivity and splendor. A little before his arrive in Mexico, he had seen in France the renovation of the book illustration, to which Derain, Vlaminck, Laboureur, Dufy and others contributed. It would be no exaggeration to say that the young French artist stimulated in our country the inquietudes of woodcut illustration.’ (November 2002)

Mexican artists appreciated it, like Zalce: “It was the first thing I saw of him. 1928. Of course the mural first. I liked it, both the poetry and the illustrations” (July 27–28, 1971). The *URBE* illustrations have become iconic for the Estridentista movement.

The contemporary reception of Charlot’s Estridentista work reflected viewers’ attitudes towards the poetry movement (Schneider 1970: 110). In 1924, List Arzubide praised “Serenidad disgregada de la línea que eran entonces los Ensayos formales de Jean Charlot.” ‘The disintegrated serenity of line that were at that time the formal Essays of Jean Charlot’¹⁷¹ On the contrary, the woodblocks of *Urbe* “scandalized the timid, since the brutal note of black—the essence of the graphic arts—was completely shocking to academic tastes” (Reed 1960: 28). Those illustrations continued to shock. On November 20, 1981, Fernando Díaz de Medina wrote Stefan Baciú that he appreciated the Estridentista writers:

Pero esta plástica deformativa, tirando a lo horrendo, de Charlot no me agrada ni me persuade. Entra en la corriente distorsionadora del arte moderno, o sea el feísmo contemporáneo... (a-estética se podría llamar a los grabados de Charlot.)

‘But this deformative plasticity, drawing from the horrendous, of Charlot neither pleases nor persuades me. It enters into the distorting current of modern art, or the contemporary cult of the ugly...(Charlot’s woodblocks could be called a-esthetic.)

1.2.3. WORKS ON PAPER

In 1923 through 1924, Charlot continued to create drawings of his earlier subjects: portraits, street sketches, landscapes, villagescapes, Indian dancers, scenes of life, preparatory drawings, and so on. He was also creating illustrations for Anita Brenner’s *Idols*: drawings and watercolors of Precolumbian art (Glusker 2010: 200), folk arts (212, 226, 566), and free variations on folk arts (511). He often records “copie Anita” ‘copy for Anita’ in his diaries. An accurate assessment of this work is difficult because only a fraction is available or has been photographed. Two new genres can, however, be identified. The first was a set of five large, formal drawings of Mexican costumes and a uniform discussed above (Chapter 7, Section 1.2.1).

The second new genre was an important series of nude drawings of Luz Jiménez. I will use my previous discussion of this series below (John Charlot 2007). The nude was a basic subject for the French classical tradition with which Charlot identified himself, and he had practiced the genre in both academic and studio sessions in France and early in Mexico: “El ‘pretexto’ mejor para la gran pintura siempre fue el desnudo” ‘The best “pretext” for great painting has always been the nude.’¹⁷² Charlot continued to use non-indigenous nude models like Nahui Olin and Anita Brenner.

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The human body has also been the basis of historically and culturally conditioned art canons, which Charlot used to describe the artist's mental process between perception and creation in his *Traité de Peinture* of 1920/1922.¹⁷³ A culture's canon is the key to understanding and practicing its art (e.g., *AA* II 41, 62). In Mexico, Charlot would explore that canon through art—the indigenous tradition of the nude (e.g., Winning 1968: 16)—but needed also personal observation of its foundation: the Indian body. The final product would be a “kind of mixing up both the sighting, you could say, of the Indian nude and the things I knew about Aztec Indians” (Interview August 7, 1971).

The crucial importance of the indigenous body canon had been recognized, especially by Gamio, and Leal “aimed at giving their racial types a monumentality undiluted by occidental standards.”¹⁷⁴ Despite this, on the evidence, Charlot was the first fine artist to work directly from a native female nude model.¹⁷⁵ The nude models in his earlier Mexican drawings—whether employed by San Carlos or privately—were of European or mixed race. Nudes were excluded from EPAL as “unnatural” (*MMR* 165 [Leal]), and native models were dressed in folkloric costumes. Native communities regarded nude modeling as shameful, and some ambivalence can be felt in Mexico even today about Luz's work. In drawing the female Indian nude, Charlot was following his practice of developing new subjects as well as exploring traditional ones. Being the first to treat the subject, he was free from secondary influences and thus unusually immediate in his observation and innovative in his creation. That he was able to pursue this subject was a result of the special trust established between himself and the model.

Charlot had been interested in racial body differences in France, as seen in his *Female nude, Mediterranean type, with armband* (Volume 1, Chapter 8, Section 1.3.2). In Mexico, he wrote a detailed description probably of Anita Brenner's body. In Yucatán, he found the Maya body different from the Aztec. In the United States, he painted a very different set of nudes and, in Hawai'i and the Pacific, found yet another set of body types. Charlot gave me a booklet, now lost, on the body in the art of India to compare and contrast the significance each culture assigns to different parts of the body. He told me he had owned the booklet “all my life”; the subject was important for him. In the Luz drawings:

the most striking thing in retrospect perhaps are the series of nudes I did which are not tainted, I would say, by the idea of a classical Greek or Roman nude, and as such I think go rather deep into the point of view of the Indian. (Interview August 7, 1971)

Charlot remembered starting the series of nude drawings in late 1923, but the first diary mention is March 4, 1924: “4 dessins nu de Luz” ‘four drawings of Luz nude.’¹⁷⁶ Charlot continued the series for several years, for instance, noting in his diary for November 16, 1927: “35 dessins Luz nue” ‘thirty-five drawings of Luz nude.’ Pablo O'Higgins provided a picture of a session: “Luciana was sitting on a *petate*, completely nude, very beautiful, and Jean was painting her... And they were talking Náhuatl” (1974). One of the earliest drawings may be US-008, a preparatory sketch for Charlot's 1925 CL 115 *Great Nude. Chalma I*. Charlot produced a large number of drawings in the series.¹⁷⁷ Weston mentions “maybe thirty or more,” and I saw about the same number in my father's studio in the 1960s.¹⁷⁸ Charlot seems to have given many away as gifts, and many now appear at internet auction sites, and so on. Signatures and dates have often been added. A full scale listing and study would be valuable.

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The study of the Aztec nude enabled Charlot to develop several new subjects. Charlot's first three nude paintings of Luz resemble the European academic nude: CL 72 *Nude back* and CL 73 *Nude, front, at door*, both November 1924; CL 91 *Nude with adobe wall* (May 1925). Charlot was, however, uncomfortable with the artificiality of the setting and sought a native context in which nudity would be normal. The first such painting is CL 109 *Bath, mother and child* of November 1925, followed immediately by CL 110 *Bather, arm raised*. CL 115 *Great Nude, Chalma I* (1925), specifies the bathing of the pilgrims to Chalma before they enter the town. Charlot treated the communal steam bath in both an oil—CL 117 *Temascal (Steam Bath) I* (1925)—and a lithograph, *Temascal* (M69; 1925); “Some of my later motifs had their beginning in this print.”¹⁷⁹ Later, some of Charlot's *lavanderas* would be washing clothes nude in the stream (e.g., Glusker 2010: 414). As usual, Charlot needed time to digest his observations.

Charlot took the body of Luz as diagnostic for the Aztec woman. Edward Weston's photograph of Luz nude from the back reveals some of the qualities that attracted Charlot.¹⁸⁰ In comparison with the Classical Western body, Luz's head is large. Her strong shoulders, broad back, and slim hips form a block with only a fold of flesh indicating the waist. Her arms are thin, and her legs taper ever more narrowly down to her small feet. Charlot felt his study and rendering of this body was validated by the statuette of a *tortillera* that he was given by the Panduro-family of folk potters in Tlaquepaque:

It was really a terra-cotta statuette, and I had already done portraits of Luz and so on with gestures of making tortillas, and I recognized, of course, the gestures I had seen in Luz in the little statuette.

Well, I think it was a sort of a security for me that those series of drawings and woodcuts of the nude had been on the right line, because that little statue is, of course, a sort of a praise of the feminine body, but in terms that certainly are untouched by Greek and Roman classical beauty. Between the bulk, for example, of the body and the limbs that are represented not for the muscle formation but for the rhythm of the work, and the relation of the small head on the large body, all those things are for me a sort of a pleasant reminder that what I had found on my own was something that also existed in the head of the Indian artist, of the Indian potter. (Interview August 7, 1971)

The drawings of Luz are Charlot's analysis of her body, an analysis that will be synthesized in later works like the lithograph *Temascal* of 1925. But Charlot is inspired by his subject, and his intensity communicates itself with all his artistry to the viewer. Again, Alfons Goldschmidt responded:

Mit unendlicher Liebe sieht der Maler die herbsüße Trauer des Indio-Auges, die breitwelligen Flächen des braunen Leibes, die organische Zierlichkeit der Beine im Verhältnis zur weichen Körpermassigkeit. Was zunächst plump scheint, wird durch ihn graziös bewegt: Blick, Haar, Gang und Lässigkeit werden tonvoll wie die Indio-Sprache. Hundertmal hat Charlot Luziana, eine India aus Milpa-Alta bei Mexiko-Stadt, gezeichnet und gemalt, begeistert von dem sanften Linienschwung dieses

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Körpers. Er zeigt die selbstverständliche Schamhaftigkeit der India und ihre unerotische Versonnenheit. Auch für den Rassentheoretiker sind diese Zeichnungen und Bilder von hohem Wert. Die Aztekin Luziana ist eines der ganz wenigen India-Modelle in Mexiko. (Goldschmidt 1927)

‘With infinite love does the painter see the bitter-sweet sorrow of the Indian eye, the broadly undulating surfaces of the brown body, the organic gracefulness of the legs in relation to the soft mass of the body. What at first seems plump is put by him gracefully into motion: look, hair, walk, and repose become as melodious as the Indian language. A hundred times has Charlot drawn and painted Luciana, an Indian woman from Milpa Alta near Mexico City, inspired by the soft elasticity of the contour lines of this body. He shows the self-evident awkwardness of the Indian woman and her unerotic mental abstraction. Even for theorists of race are these drawings and pictures of the highest value. The Aztec Luciana is one of the very few Indian models in Mexico.’

Charlot also described the idealized body of Luz as a true cultural canon:

Well, I haven’t achieved it yet. That is, it’s sort of a monumental idea. And given that it is not in anatomical terms, that idea of Indian esthetic doesn’t remain inside or skin-deep with the form of a body but pervades, or should pervade, everything around. And it is such a sort of nearly encyclopedic affair that I have been working for it, well, pretty much a lifetime, and I still feel that I could work for it another lifetime and not get to the end of it. It’s not a question of saying, "Eureka!" It’s just a question of following and finding in things—say, the shape of trees or the ears of a mule or any such thing—the same esthetic qualities which I felt are part of the Indian world. (Interview August 7, 1971)

The Luz nudes can be divided into three types: quick line sketches without changes, line drawings with the initial lines in light sanguine and final ones in dark charcoal, and fully modeled drawings.¹⁸¹ An adequate study would require assembling a large number of these works so my discussion here must be preliminary.

The salient characteristics of Charlot’s analysis can be identified by their contrast with the European nude: the lack of an indented waist and the shorter legs in relation to the torso. Charlot’s tendency can be seen clearly in the second type of drawing described above, that is, in the differences between the light sanguine and the dark charcoal lines. Charlot generally increases somewhat the bulk depicted in the preliminary lines while diminishing it at the wrists and ankles. The bulkiness differs markedly from the modern European body, but less from the stately women of Charlot’s youth. He once told me, while looking at the photograph of a runway model, that some men prefer their women in three dimensions. Charlot deemphasizes the waist and balances the sizes of the upper and lower body by equalizing them, thus departing from the evidence of the Weston photographs in which the hips appear slimmer than the back. With the de-emphasis of the waist, the torso now combines with enlarged hips

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and thighs to form a more unified shape. Charlot sees the Aztec thigh as less an extension from the torso than a continuation of it. From that central shape the legs and feet taper below and the arms and head extend above. With legs and arms tucked in, Luz's body becomes an impressive, geometrically malleable mass.

Though massive and strong, Luz's body is gracefully female in Charlot's drawings, as Goldschmidt noted. One device Charlot used to create that effect was to make Luz's wrists and ankles slender. In French, a praise term for feminine beauty is *fines attaches*, fine or slender wrist and ankle joints. When in a later lecture Charlot discussed the Hawaiian body, he mentioned that the French artist Jacques Arago (1790–1855) had been discomfited by the immense body of the Hawaiian queen Ka'ahumanu (1768–1832), but had conceded that she had *fines attaches*. All the above qualities are used by Charlot in his synthesis of the Aztec body, of which the lithograph *Temascal* (October 1925) is an early example and an announcement of a program: "Some of my later motifs had their beginning in this print" (M69).

Beyond the genre of the academic nude, classical practice for major works prescribed nude studies of the figures who would then be covered with clothing, the shape of which would be determined by the body inside. As analyzed by Charlot, the Aztec body when robed could be rendered, for instance, as the cube with rounded edges that he would develop in many media. The Luz nudes are a key to understanding the radical stylistic difference between his oils of 1922 and those of 1924. The drawings were begun before the 1924 paintings, which reveal their influence. The stylistic *evolution*, as Charlot terms it, can be followed from the series *Female Nudes in Rust-red and Blue-gray Lines*. The models have European bodies characterized by a narrow waist and long legs, resulting in a tall, slim figure. In his first oils in Mexico—*Luz with Parrot* and *Woman with Jug*—Charlot used a stocky version of this familiar figure and even fell back on a geometric abstraction of the breasts, which he had devised in France.¹⁸² Charlot had still not observed the Aztec body directly. Moreover, Charlot was still emphasizing the folk clothing of the EPAL models, which he had first encountered as a child in the nineteenth-century figurines collected by his family. That is, Charlot was working from the outside in towards the Aztec body. Similarly, in his Street Sketches, Charlot was interested in observed oddities and variations of clothing but was beginning to treat major traditional articles like sombreros and sarapes volumetrically, often thickening the cloth to emphasize the geometric form.¹⁸³ The stylization is, however, connected more to the clothing than necessarily to the body beneath. Charlot was still working from the outside in.

Only after the Luz nudes could Charlot realize the classical goal of a finished, clothed figure determined ultimately by the nude beneath the clothing that had been studied during the preparation. From 1924 on, women's clothes are usually simplified to undecorated, medium-thickness cloths that both reveal the body they drape and help produce an overall geometric shape. Charlot was finally working from the inside out. This evolution—along with other factors like the shortening of the human figure and the incorporation of folk devices—would contribute largely to what has been called "the Charlot style." That the style was developed on female subjects more than male is due to the role of Luz as model, both

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nude and clothed. Charlot's initial interest in a wide range of male subjects, as seen in his *Street Sketches*, was reduced to a small number in which the men are usually dressed in the conventional Colonial suit.

Charlot's nude drawings of Luz circulated widely and are found now in several collections. Their influence has been suspected but not assessed.¹⁸⁴ I see influence in two works of Rivera. A drawing dated 1919 in another hand seems clearly based on Charlot's drawings for CL 115, *Great Nude, Chalma*, of October 1925.¹⁸⁵ The model appears to be Luz, but she was not posing nude that early.

Also, the female nude in the lower right corner of Rivera's 1926/1927 wall *The Liberated Earth with Natural Forces Controlled by Man* at Chapingo seems a direct copy of or at least strongly influenced by Charlot's drawings of Luz. In what is probably a preparatory drawing, dated 1925, Rivera's Luz is recognizable as Charlot drew her, sitting on a mat or the floor with her two braids down her back (Crosse 2014: illustration 19). Rivera's figure is modeled, but was started from an outline drawing, as seen in the abandoned right foot. However, unlike Charlot's modeled drawings, Rivera has widened and strengthened the outlines so that the modeling becomes a secondary enhancement of the outline drawing. The figure differs not only stylistically from the rest of the Chapingo panel, but her space or perspective is inconsistent with her surroundings. In my opinion, Rivera copied rather than absorbed one of Charlot's outline drawings.

Luz's figure differs from the more European ones of the two other nudes on the Chapingo wall. A comparison of the preparatory drawing with Charlot's is instructive. Whereas Charlot deemphasizes the legs and emphasizes the torso, Rivera reverses the process by two well-known devices. The legs appear longer by being placed nearer the viewer—a photographic distortion—and the torso appears smaller by being inclined away from the viewer and thus reduced by perspective. Moreover, Charlot deemphasizes the waist while Rivera reemphasizes it with a clear indentation and a long flesh fold line on the left echoed by a shorter one on the right. As a result, Rivera deemphasizes the difference of the Aztec nude from the European, whereas Charlot emphasizes it, even in three drawings dated June 1924 in which he uses some of the devices Rivera did later. The legs of Rivera's figure would be long even for a European. Rivera is characteristically tempering the stylistic explorations of Charlot—as he does of other artists—to develop a more familiar and palatable style for the general viewer. Also, as seen by the problem of the perspectival space of the figure on the Chapingo wall, he does not extend esthetic innovations to the whole work, but contents himself with stylistic disunity. When in the 1950s, my father and I visited an exhibition with a series of Monet's haystacks, he preferred the one with the strongest frame-filling, form-dissolving sun, the furthest Monet was pushing his vision.

An activity increasing in 1923 is the working up of street sketches and other drawings into formal works on paper. A large number of modeled, colored, and detailed drawings of Luz start in this period. Charlot could also depict her in aquarelle.¹⁸⁶ In 1921, Charlot had used watercolors and gouaches for exploratory, Cubist work like “4 gouaches Gleize [*sic*]” ‘four gouaches Gleizes’ and “1 nu Picasso” ‘one nude Picasso’ (1920/1925 Ludwigshafen Notebook). His first painting in Mexico was his 1921 watercolor *Puerto Mexico*, in which studied the humid air of the coast. In 1922, Charlot listed only

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one aquarelle besides two preparatory ones for murals (a fourth is mentioned only in the Diary), an indication of how absorbed he was in other work.

Starting in late 1923 and through 1925, aquarelles become a major artistic activity for Charlot. That he considered them finished works is seen in that they are sometimes signed and dated. Most show a few light pencil marks, but they are covered by the final washes. Three of the earliest available to me are based on his street sketches. *Street Vendor with Cloths in Mexico City* of October 1923 is based on DS 094.¹⁸⁷ The figure of the undated *Man with Long Head Sitting in front of Big Bundle, jungle setting, two huts* is based on US 005, although the setting has been changed from a desert to a tropical village.¹⁸⁸ *Cargador with Big Cloth Bundle*, of January 24, 1924, does not have an exactly corresponding street sketch, but the main figure is similar to such sketches and the man standing in the background is typical of them.¹⁸⁹

Charlot used a number of devices to turn his sketches into more formal works. In developing *Street Vendor with Cloths in Mexico City* from the street sketch, Charlot accentuated the twist of the feet, eliminated the left hand holding the cloths, and brought the right arm forward from behind the hip to the front, revealing an expressionistic hand. In DS 094, the faceless head is up and alert. In the wash, new facial lines depict the vendor looking down pensively. Erased pencil lines show that Charlot worked particularly to integrate head and hat into a sort of column top for the whole figure. Less muted colors and white dots distinguish the cloths hung over the vendor's shoulder.

In *Cargador with Big Cloth Bundle*, the bearer is about to fall backwards under the weight of his monstrous burden. Charlot articulates the interior of the figure more than in his sketches: the alarmed eyes looking up and the graphic, black lines of the face and torso express the bearer's straining. His overlarge hands seem an extreme example of photographic distortion. The background reinforces this impression. A garbage bin behind him is strongly distorted to show the trajectory of his fall: the left line of the bearer's head strap joins the back line of the bin on its way to the ground. The diagonals of the street and sidewalk look like they have been pressed down from the vertical edge of the painting by the same force that is pushing against the bearer. The unburdened bystander on the sidewalk represents the true vertical.

A further device was combining the single figures of street sketches into a larger composition, as seen in *Cargador with Big Cloth Bundle*. Charlot's 1923 washes of street kids or newsboys, *papeleros*, are the earliest examples I know: *Two Newsboys on Mexico City Street* and *Three Street Boys Playing on Mexico City Street*.¹⁹⁰ Both are strong works. Erased pencil lines on *Two Newsboys on Mexico City Street* reveal that Charlot originally intended the boys to be standing in a cobblestone street, but he simplified the design into large blank areas. The whole background is tipped up and flattened, making the boys stand out in their comparative three-dimensionality. The two boys are contrasted. The one on the left is comparatively well dressed, although the bulky clothes and overlarge hat are clearly hand-me-downs or plunder. The boy on the right is in rags. The left boy looks up aggressively and calls out his wares. The one on the right looks down embarrassed, even ashamed. The left boy holds his neatly stacked newspapers, while a newspaper is slipping from the bundle on the right. The left boy is clearly

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the leader and has taken the destitute one under his protection rather than driving him from his corner. From the top corners of the painting, the upside-down triangle of a street corner presses down on the leading boy's head and continues to the mirror wedge under his feet. The right edge of the top triangle is pressing down the right boy's shoulder and head, but the leader is standing up to all the pressure. He is the man who resists and protects those more miserable than himself. A section of a spoked wheel on the left edge of the painting represents, I believe, the wheel of fortune, whose revolution will raise the low and topple the high. Indeed, on the sidewalk at the top of the composition, the running person on the right is sure to hurtle into the pedestrian on the left.

Three Street Boys Playing on Mexico City Street is a complex geometric composition in two- and three-dimensions. Two boys are pulling and pushing a third by a garbage can, and the pulling rope makes a trail in the dust of the street. But even in this low situation, they form a three-level hierarchy. The boy pulling the cart is clothed in just a large shirt which opens to show his naked leg. His head has been shaved probably to rid him of lice. The boy pushing the cart is better dressed, with a simple suit of pants and shirt. The boy riding is dressed like the leader in *Two Newsboys on Mexico City Street* with overalls and an over-large hat. The three form a society despite the disintegrating urban situation, but a society that mirrors some of the problems of their larger world.

The background has again been tipped up, which helps propel the cart forwards. Again, Charlot uses large, uniform spaces, but they are less realistic than in *Two Newsboys*. The top left of the picture is the corner of a building at a sidewalk, but the sidewalk disappears behind the pulling boy, and the right side of the building has been absorbed into an abstract space. The bottom left edge of the garbage bin opening bends with the curve of the pulling boy's head. A series of zigzag lines are drawn: down the left corner of the building → up the left top edge of the bin → down the right top edge of the bin; alternatively: down the left corner of the building → continuing down the left bottom edge of the bin → up the bottom right edge of the bin. These primarily two-dimensional zigzags echo the three-dimensional grouping of the boys: up the back of the pushing boy → down the riding boy and the cart → up the pulling rope to the boy's shoulder → down the front of the boy's body. Similarly, a zigzag can be traced from the pushing boy turned slightly left, through the riding boy turned slightly right, to the pulling boy again turning left.¹⁹¹ The riding boy—grasping his cart/throne—is also isolated by the vertical line of the bin that joins the vertical of the back of the pulling boy's shirt. The opening of the garbage bin also drives a wedge between the riding boy and the pushing boy behind him. In both pictures, a street dog is prominent. Urchins were often described and treated like dogs, but Charlot, who loved dogs, depicts them as nearing themselves to the boys in search of companionship and comfort, to be part of their community. The dogs feel the same needs and emotions as the boys. In the gutters of the city, fellow-feeling still rules.

Charlot used newsboys later in oil paintings, and they are one of his most touching subjects.¹⁹² In a review of the Galleria Cervantes exhibition in October 1924, Vera de Cordova wrote: “Los ‘Papeleros’ de Charlot muy bien de profundidad y de valorización cromática” ‘The Papeleros of Charlot—

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–very good in profundity and chromatic valorization’ (Clipping 35). A full discussion of Charlot’s aquarelles and gouaches in this period requires assembling a much larger number of works.

A separate category comprises formal, finished drawings done on commission. In 1923–1924, Charlot made a series of pencil-on-paper drawings of the *jarabe tapatio* for the Instituto de Cultura Estética.¹⁹³ Diary records of the project begin in October 1923, with the same hour indicating a regular dance performance.¹⁹⁴ On January 18, 1924, Charlot recorded that he was at the institute, and he later added a note to a transcription, now in the JCC: “à partir de Jan 18 Cultura Estetica (drawings for jarabe tapatio ts les jours” ‘from January 18 on, Cultura Estética (drawings for jarabe tapatio every day.’ Charlot continued his regular attendance, but recorded also his work, which ended on April 11, 1924.¹⁹⁵ Charlot later noted: “24 : Cultura Estetica : 200 Illustrations pour Jarabe Tapatio” ‘1924: Cultura Estética: 200 Illustrations for Jarabe Tapatio’ (April 1931).

The only surviving artworks of this projects that I know are those in the JCC.¹⁹⁶ Costumes and gestures are recorded meticulously. Heavy black is used for an outline in line-drawing style while light gray is used for the detailed, decorative elements of the clothes. The *charro* costume identifies the dance as the *jarabe tapatio*, an anomalous subject for Charlot, which suggests he was working on a commission. The fifth drawing in the series—a mounted soldier in uniform—indicates that the series was not just of dancers but perhaps a commission for contemporary costumes of all sorts.

Charlot continued his contact with the Cultura Estética or Mexam., and proposed further projects: “présenté Mexam 3 projets” ‘presented three projects to Mexam.’¹⁹⁷ He seems to have produced some work: “porté dessins au Mexam.” ‘took drawings to Mexam.’ (Diary May 18, 1925). But he was ultimately unhappy doing what he regarded as commercial work, as he wrote to Anita Brenner:

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

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

Whatever his negative feelings, Charlot did not stint on his work, either in study or execution. In my opinion, the drawings are fine, just as were his shields on the second floor of the Ministry of Education. The *jarabe tapatio* was a questionable subject, regarded by Charlot and others as touristic:

ni los ballets rusos, ni el jarabe Tapatio, ni el Marqués de Guadalupe son las más legítimas manifestaciones de un arte indo-americano (August 30, 1925).

‘neither the ballets russes, nor the jarabe tapatio, nor the Marquis of Guadalupe are the most legitimate manifestations of an indo-american art.’

But the main reason, I believe, was psychological. A similar case was Charlot’s refusing later to do a commercial project of small bathroom tiles, such as he had done for his own home. In a commercial project, he was following the will of others. In his real work, he was following “the famous X,” his gift, his genius in the Classical sense. For Charlot, that gift came with moral obligations: not to be used for himself with all its attachments to pride and vanity but for others. Commercial art compromised that view of the artist. Because artistic creativity was a gift, its product had to be a gift as well. If the first viewer of the art work was the person who commissioned it, the artwork itself could be compromised by non-artistic considerations. Only by directing his work to the proper viewers—God first and then the people—could the artist be true to his vocation.

8.2.3. PAINTING 1924–1925

After his important oils of 1922, Charlot had completely ceased easel painting in 1923, occupied solely with his murals, prints, and drawings (Charlot to Pach January 1923). After he and the other muralists had been fired, they had to reorient their work:

“With walls denied me, I re-educated myself somewhat shamefacedly to easel painting of small dark pictures, starting in January 1924. (*MMR* 277)

With no more walls to fresco, the young muralists tried their hand at another and very different craft, that of easel painting. The good muscles of elbow and shoulder called upon to cover large surfaces fell inactive, while those of wrist and fingers were taught to work. (*MMR* 314)

Considering himself a muralist, Charlot was depressed at the change, noting his sadness often in his diary:

Though the lack of walls has made it impossible for me for ten years to pursue my vocation of mural painting I still have an uneasy feeling that painting easel pictures is somewhat akin to embroidering doilies. (Spring 1938)

The machismo of the muralists can be heard in the statement. In his diary entry of January 5, 1924, Charlot writes of the first painting in the series, CL 26: “petite peinture insupportable” ‘insufferable little painting.’

Charlot did not return to his 1922 oils as a point of departure but set out in an entirely different direction:

Very soon, I found I couldn’t go on, I would say, as a Frenchman, as a Cubist, in front of the things that I was seeing, because they were different. They were different from Paris, and I had to learn again. I had to be, I would say *literally* born again. And so I started with small pictures—that is a very small picture—doing in a way which is closer to that of the penny-sheets or the Images d’Épinal; that is, popular, folk art,

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painting like a folk artist without wanting to, but simply because I was in a hurry to forget what I knew. And I knew a heck of a lot. I still do. (March 8, 1972)

The emphasis on folk art in Charlot's next, long series of oils was part of his broad search for a specific Mexican esthetic. Whereas the Luz nudes were part of his direct observation, the oils were a study of the local art. By highlighting the primitive, innocent folk devices, Charlot could reveal their similarities to sophisticated modern ones. That is, he could demonstrate that many folk devices coincide with modernist ones or could be adapted into modernist works. For instance, folk labels could be used like the modernist integration of lettering into the overall design (CL 27, 28, 30). Charlot used the stage presentation of CL 30 *Pilgrims, with curtains* (January 1924) in his 1944 murals *Cortez Lands in Mexico, Time Discloseth All Things, Paratroopers Land in Sicily*. Certain cases were easy like CL 105 *Luz seated, child in arms, with curtain*, in which the framing curtain was originally a folk borrowing from fine arts. As Alfred Frankenstein wrote:

The Mexican renaissance of the 1920's was born out of a social upheaval, which created a new proletarian art, a new folk consciousness and a new primitivism. Charlot was the spearhead of that primitive revival. His little, blocky, monumental figures with the spherical heads, painted in earthy Mexican browns and blacks, modeled as if with crude stone tools, went back to sources deep in the ancient immemorial traditions of the land. (1938)

Charlot's intention is clarified by his calling the series "the primitives of the movement," the name by which they became known to other artists. Carlos Mérida stated:

Ahora, yo creo que, las influencias que él recibió o que él buscaba están manifestadas en su trabajo después del veinticinco, en cuenta la pintura un poco oscura, que se ha dado en llamar "la pintura primitiva" del movimiento.¹⁹⁸

'Then, I believe that the influences that he received and that he sought were manifested in his work since 1925, especially the painting, a little dark, that has been called 'the primitive painting' of the movement.'

Like the Italian Primitives, Charlot's made recognizably popular devices available to fine art, thus creating a more inclusive Mexican esthetic. Charlot's emotional connection to such popular art is revealed in his 1976 CL 1351 *Mother and child*, yellow background to which he added the note: "MEXIHKANANTLI as title part of pix." Painted thr

With a few problems, the paintings in the series can be identified and dated. As opposed to his annual lists of drawings and washes, Charlot tried to be complete in his Checklist of paintings. Nonetheless, discrepancies of order and dating are found between the Checklist and Charlot's diaries. I will follow the diaries. Also, some oils mentioned in the diaries are missing from the Checklist:

Luz à l'huile, May 1920, 1924

Luz au metate, September 10, 1924

Ameca, May 89, 1925

maisons place, May 25, 1925
Arche [?] au palmier, July 2, 1925
Portrait Miss Smith, September 8, 1925
 no title given, September 10, 1925
2 palmiers, September 10, 1925
1 metate, September 16, 1925
Portrait Miss Smith II, November 21, 1925
 possible, December 29, 1925

Some oils were destroyed or over painted with or without a surviving visual record: CL 32, 37, 64, 90. CL 32 *Mother with child, lean* was extremely stylized with a baby's head poking up at the end of a rebozo. Other oils in the Checklist can be matched only problematically to diary entries. Nonetheless, the diary reveals how quickly Charlot was working, especially in view of his remaining mural and other work at the time.¹⁹⁹ For instance, over January 8 and 9, 1924, he has written “semaine où je peins des tableaux” ‘week when I paint canvases’; over January 10 through 12, “peins dans la semaine 5 4 tableaux” ‘paint five four canvases during the week.’ When he could, Charlot was selling the paintings for “50 piasters soit 25 dollars chaque” ‘fifty piasters or twenty-five dollars apiece’ (Charlot to Pach October 27, 1925).

As seen above, Charlot and others thought of his small oils as a series, violating the chronological order of his Checklist to keep them separate from “Larger size pictures, painted 1925” (CL between 110 and 111). After using several sizes and formats at the beginning of 1924—e.g., 16” X 13”, 10” X 8”, 12 ½” X 15”, 14 ½” X 12”, 13” X 16”—he settled on 14” X 10 ¾”, first used CL 38 on February 1516. He used this size both vertically and horizontally (or portrait and landscape) exclusively through the end of 1924 and up to CL 110 of September 1925. In 1926, out of CL 121142, only 123, 124, 125, 127, 128, are the same size, and they all belong to Charlot's new Chich'en Itza work.

When starting the series, Charlot characteristically returned to his earlier street sketches:

CL 27 <i>Burden-bearer, seen from back.</i>	DS-048
CL 28 <i>Peasant with sugar cane.</i>	DS-040. (Glusker 2010: 446).
CL 29 <i>Child carrying petate. (Petatero).</i>	DS-080.
CL 31 <i>Gossip. Tlalpam.</i>	DS-065.
CL 34 <i>Beggar with violin.</i>	DS-50, 106
CL 35 <i>Delousing in doorway.</i>	DS-107, 116, 117.

As with watercolors and gouaches, Charlot could elaborate an image by composing more than one figure from the sketches: e.g., in CL 30 *Pilgrims, with curtains*, the male is from sketches such as DS 40, 74, the woman is directly from DS 102, and the child is unprecedented, as far as I know. Charlot intensified the geometry of the composition in accordance with the greater formality of an oil painting. In CL 44 *Xochimilco. Chinampas*, the right background figure seen from the front is developed from DS 051. Other paintings resemble sketches—like CL 33 *Burden bearer, front view*, compared to DS-070—but have probably been developed further.

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However, the predominantly new subjects of the series reveal it as a second reconnaissance after the Street Sketches. Charlot was looking for new subjects and new ways of presenting them. His model Luz Jiménez played a crucial role in this search from the very first painting in the series, CL 26 *Luz en buste. Very dark*, of January 5, 1924. Largely to her influence can be attributed the major place of women and their cultural roles in the series, unusual among the muralists; “For example, my Indian women nursing her child is, of course, Luz nursing Concha” (Interview October 31, 1970). Luz was introducing Charlot to the contemporary Aztec world, comprising classical elements from the Pre Columbian past along with Colonial and modern ones. Charlot could portray her with a basket (CL 40) or a book (CL 39, 41). With the exception of market scenes, all the paintings of Luz constitute new subjects. Even when she is posing in a chair, the setting is convincingly domestic rather than academic. Charlot could use Luz in the series also for exploratory work, for instance, the first oils of Luz nude (CL 72, 73, 91, 110). As seen above, Luz also provided stylistic feedback for Charlot, helping him to adapt his work to his new subjects and viewers. She played the same role at this stage of Charlot’s development as the mason Luis Escobar had in the painting of his first mural, *The Massacre in the Main Temple*.

Luz also took Charlot and others to her village Milpa Alta and on pilgrimage to Chalma. Charlot wrote at the beginning of his 1925 diary:

1925 January 1 to 9. Pilgrimage to Chalma. ~~See Pastoras, etc..~~

Dances = Pastoras, etc.. [CL 85, 86]

Mystery Plays = Bato y Bras, etc..

Charlot provided a description of an experience that inspired a major subject for him:

With Luciana, we went for example to Indian pilgrimages, which were really pagan business and not white man’s business or tourist business. This is a procession in Chalma. The Virgin, the statue of the Virgin with the seven swords in her heart, is being carried along on the shoulders of the people. You can see, of course, the Veronica Kerchief carried by an old gentleman in front, and so on and so forth. There was a terrific intensity in the devotion of those people, and they were so intent that that particular procession caught me between two walls in a narrow alley, and I thought I was going to be flattened as a pancake. Much as I tried to press against the wall, I was somewhat bruised. So I tried to celebrate such a happening with this picture. March 8, 1924)

Charlot could also find in village life practices that could be adapted to his previous needs. For instance, the *temascal* and bathing in a river provided natural settings for nude figures, as in CL 109 *Bath, mother and child*. As stated earlier, in Charlot’s depictions of Indians in their home villages, they do not suffer the pressures of an urban setting: the backgrounds do not attack the figure as in Charlot’s early woodcuts. This is the thematic contrast between his murals *Lavanderas* and *Cargadores*.

Charlot was also recording new sights. On August 9, 1924, he visited Xochimilco and saw the *chinampas* or fabricated garden islands. On December 8, he finished his oil of the subject, CL 44. He

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painted the traditional village Amecameca,²⁰⁰ Las Brisas, and other villagescapes (CL 81, 84, 87, 92, 95, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 106a). As in his street sketches, he recorded events that he did not develop into regular themes: CL 52 *Almsgiving*; CL 55 *Street Accident: Tram rams Hearse*; CL 64 *Women kneeling, with scapularies*; CL 66 *Burial of a child*; CL 76 *Eucharistic Congress (Church Interior)*;²⁰¹ CL 77 *Confirmation of Children*. Charlot included genres like landscape (above and CL 36, 49, 94) and portraiture (CL 51) in the series. He could be inspired by a chance happening as when the serape weaver Léon Venado hid in Pablo O'Higgins apartment, playing his guitar, while the police sought him in the street for murder.²⁰²

Part of his motivation was the need for variety, as he wrote Anita Brenner:

I am painting a lot of little pictures landscapes. This completes my future exhibition.

It was a little monotonous you know : Luz sentada, Luz parada, Luz acostada, Luz vestida, Luz desnuda, and so on. (“Received your letter. poetry”)

‘Luz seated, Luz standing, Luz lying down, Luz clothed, Luz nude, and so on.’

Charlot even produced an oil caricature—CL 68 *Dowager and Newsboys* (also CL 135)—that Brenner related correctly to the opposition to the mural movement by the Unión de Damas Católicas Mexicanas:

the portrait of a lady in purple with a red wig and a preposterous hat, wearing the medal of a religious organization large and golden upon her bosom. She was the only comment on the troubles of Mother Church that a devout son permitted himself.²⁰³

Such women personified for Charlot the bourgeois Christianity he abhorred:

Y en a-t-il assez des grosses femmes avec leur face à main—l’auto et la communion quotidienne. mon confesseur dit qu'elles iront au ciel. (peut-être sur des prie-Dieu réservés). (September 1922)

‘Are there enough of those gross women with their face in the hands—the daily automobile and communion. my confessor says they will go to heaven. (maybe on reserved prie-Dieus).

Charlot soon restricted his caricatures to drawing and ink wash.

Charlot was certainly exploring style in his series of small oils. Brenner describes his “carefully limited aesthetic experiments” (*Idols* 304). Preparatory drawings are mentioned in his diaries (Diary February 18, 19, 1925) and were probably made for all the oils with the exception of CL 82 *Still-life with dice*, which was “composé en peinture” ‘composed in paint’ and gave Charlot the most trouble (Diary January 23, 1925, and below).

The earliest problem was to create oils from the sketches with the advantages of the new medium. An example of the process is found in CL 28 *Peasant with sugar cane* (Glusker 2010: 446), based on DS-040. All the volumes suggested by the line drawing are made explicit by the modeling and can then be used in the composition: for example, the left arm and vertical leg overlap partially to form a cylindrical column. Also, in the oil, the three-dimensional modeling of the shoulder pack, head band, and

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sombrero contrasts more clearly with the two-dimensional bundle on the back. This contrast is emphasized by the lighting in the oil, which flows down over hat, headband, shoulder bundle, shoulder, sleeve cuff, and pants cuff, picking up their different colors as it falls. In contrast, the back bundle and face are in shadows that render them comparatively two-dimensional. Charlot uses a Precolumbian device to create another reminder of the two-dimensional character of the canvas: the feet cannot be unambiguously identified as front and back. Finally, Charlot suppresses the shirt in DS-040 and simplifies the body into two legs that meet at the foreground shoulder. He has increased the tipping of the sombrero to a more daring and inscrutable angle. *Peasant with sugar cane* and DS-040 are authentic examples of their different media.

Many of the series are copies or adaptations of folk arts. CL 55 *Street Accident: Tram rams Hearse* was done “After a relief etching by Guadalupe Posada”; Charlot increased the forward tipping of the background and imposed a top-down perspective. CL 69 *Toy Horse* was connected to the work Charlot and Weston were doing for Anita Brenner (Chapter 3, Section 2.5.3). CL 61 *Hill with three Crosses* is probably an outdoors shrine; a version of it provides the view out the small window in the lithograph M69 *Temascal*.²⁰⁴ Charlot addressed several folk subjects in order to revalorize them as fine art:

CL 46 *Hand holding bouquet*²⁰⁵

CL 48 *Bobette, a lap dog*.

CL 67 *Luz holding flower*.

CL 70 *Clasped Hands*.

CL 80 *Still-life with Hearts*

CL 83 *Sirene making music*.

CL 88 *Paloma (Hope) (Noah's Dove)*

CL 97 *Doves in nest*.

As seen above, Charlot was studying folk art devices for incorporation into modernist paintings. He was also purging himself of European devices that were confusing for the Mexican viewer, like the use of highlights (Chapter 2, Section 5).

Charlot's compositions in the series are characteristically geometric and complex, although simplicity is the first impression they make. One device is tipping up the background behind a central foreground figure to form an almost vertical wall, creating a setting in which the figure becomes iconic: e.g., CL 47 *Marchanta selling oranges*; CL 57 *Man squatting, wrapped in serape* and CL 59 *Still-life: Metate*. The subjects are not treated as symbols but as meaningful in themselves. Their simplified shapes against the almost two-dimensional background recall hieroglyphs, charged with meaning even when undeciphered. Charlot brings this glyphic intensity to figures in other genres like landscape as seen in CL 49 *Landscape with magueys* as compared to the more conventional CL 36 *Landscape: Dawn, gray and*

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yellow, men leaving their village Tlamamalco in the morning for work.²⁰⁶ Similarly, Charlot is interested in images that are conventional symbols (CL 88 *Paloma [Hope] [Noah's Dove]*) and signs (CL 96 *Hand, pointing*). Finally, the more or less two-dimensional background with the figures set upon it recalls not only folk devices but Precolumbian codices. CL 44 *Xochimilco. Chinampas* is a grandiose example with the waterways tilted up to form a background.²⁰⁷ The viewer registers the unrealistic image as folkish but bold and expressive. Charlot has revealed the power of the device.

In the series, Charlot was moving from the analytical stage of his work—as seen in the oils of 1922—into the synthesizing, reaching the goals I have described above in Chapter 6. Overt virtuosity gave place to monumental simplicity. Charlot used his nude studies of Luz, shortening and widening the body and draping it into geometric shapes. Charlot's initial, bright palette was toned down into the color sense Charlot was studying in *rebozos* and other popular creations (CL 52, 58, 75). At CL 26, Charlot described the first painting in the series as “Very dark.” He told my brother Martin that he wanted to paint pictures whose lightest color would be black. On September 12, 1925, he wrote in his diary: “signé mes tableaux noirs” ‘signed my black pictures.’

Charlot achieved an understanding of Náhuatl culture that enabled him to identify its key concepts and creations and to create a style that could communicate them authentically. I was convinced of this at his 1994 retrospective in Tlaxcala, where I had been struck by CL 57 *Man squatting, wrapped in serape*, on seeing it for the first time. A group of Aztec male elders approached me, led by a young woman, who was the only one who could speak Spanish. She told me formally that they had asked her to state that my father had correctly understood and portrayed their culture. She invited me to visit their village and accompany them on their pilgrimage to Chalma.

The most anomalous painting of the series is CL 82 *Still-life with dice*, an extreme stylistic experiment when compared, say, with CL 89 *Still-life with water melon*. *Still-life with dice* is the exception to Charlot's quick work with the other small paintings, as recorded in his 1925 diary (I emphasize again the tentativeness of the decoding):

- January 23: “composé en peinture” ‘composed in paint’
- January 24: “couvert as” ‘glaze dice’
- January 25: “fini as sauf salle” ‘finished dice except room’
- January 26: “salle as” ‘room dice’
- January 28: “refais peinture as” ‘redo dice painting’
- January 30: “silhouette as” ‘silhouette dice’
- January 31: “couvert as” ‘glaze dice’
- February 1: “as” ‘dice’
- February 2 “salle as” ‘room dice’
- February 9: “fini peinture. Nature morte aux dés : 58” ‘finished painting: Still-life with dice: 58’

Charlot started *Still-life with dice* by composing in paint rather than by making a preparatory drawing, an exception to his normal practice, and it sometimes created difficulties. He apparently glazed the dice once

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they were done the first and second time. On January 25, he finished everything except the room, which he worked on the next day. Unhappy with the result, he began reworking the painting from the 28th. He started again with the objects on the table—*silhouette* can have its English meaning or “profile of cross section” (Harrap)—which occupied him until February 1. He then worked on the room. He finished the whole on February 9, recording the event with more detail than usual in his diary.

At first sight, the painting appears to be an eccentric Cubist essay. The still-life subject is typically Cubist. The white dice—which catch the eye first—are not in Italian perspective and could be a Cubist analysis that Charlot described with another example:

Figure IV is a very logical sketch of a table as seen by someone who moves around and shifts his point of view. It gives you a front view of the table and a side view from the left. Then we move around and look at the table from the right. Italian perspective is no more scientific than this; it just presupposes a keyhole. Most of the Cubists' extraordinary objects have been done simply in the more realistic vein of having a number of points of view. (Disney lectures I)

But the lack of Cubist elements elsewhere in the painting argues for a non-Cubist interpretation. The key to understanding the two dice on the left is that each is set on one of its edges. They cannot be resting on one side or surface on the table but must be moving to avoid settling. Dice move by rolling as is made clear by the top die emerging from the dark blue glass cup: not only is the die on its edge but that edge is half on the cup rim and half on the table. As dice roll, one side disappears below while another emerges above. Charlot has suggested this motion by making the top die show more of its underside than the bottom one while the opposite occurs with their respective upper sides. The viewer feels a progression in the rolling forwards. In the ink sketch of the painting in Charlot's Checklist, the rolling dice are the top and right ones, a change made probably to fit the three dice into the smaller space. (The right die in the painting serves another purpose as will be seen below). Charlot's depiction of the dice is not Cubist, but in the mid-1920s it would have reminded the viewer inevitably of that movement. I think Charlot was alerting the viewer to the need for a geometric understanding of *Still-life with dice*.

Charlot is exploring two alternatives to Italian perspective, alternatives discussed in his 1920–1922 *Traité de Peinture* and more systematically in his 1938 Disney lectures, which I will quote at length. Italian perspective—often considered natural or normal—is monocular or from a single point of view, and “The lines recede and meet at the horizon” (Disney lectures I). Thus a table painted in Italian perspective will be wider on the viewer's side and narrower on the opposite. The first alternative—used by artists such as Cézanne, Picasso, and Rivera in his Cubist period—is to reverse Italian perspective into antiperspective:²⁰⁸

With what I call antiperspective, to which the artists after Cézanne are so partial, I draw this kind of a Cézanne table, *Figure XIIIb*. Space is created just as well as in the Italian, scientific perspective, but it is created coming forward. The lines meet in front of the plane of the picture. Space is created between the table and the plane of the canvas or between the plane of the canvas and the onlooker. The skeleton of this

kind of perspective, *Figure XIIa*, is a series of lines animating the motion of a windshield wiper or a metronome happening on a flat plane. Those so-called depth-creating lines create depth to the same extent that the subject matter helps you understand them in depth. Otherwise they could be considered either in depth or on the surface. (Disney lectures III)

A man around seventy years old, extremely learned in art and whose judgment I respect because he is untouched by modern art, was telling me about a picture similar to this one. “You know, I’m getting tired of those fellows who draw the back side of the table always larger than the front.” He was tired of this kind of antiperspective. I could have answered him that the people who started painting this kind of a table were tired of having seen for centuries tables always drawn with the back side smaller than the front. (Disney lectures I)

In fact, antiperspective—far from being unnatural—is normative in certain art traditions:

L’arbitraire de cette donnée est bien défini dans certaines peintures persanes où le point de fuite est *en avant* du tableau, les personnages grandissant au fur et à mesure qu’ils s’éloignent. (1920–1922 *Traité de Peinture*)

‘The arbitrariness of this fact is well defined in certain Persian paintings where the vanishing point is *in front* of the picture, with the personages growing as they distance themselves.’

Charlot’s table in *Still-life with dice* is in antiperspective. Its narrowing diagonals are reinforced by the floorboards, which have been tipped up almost to vertical before meeting the interior wall, which is parallel to the picture plane.

Charlot next discusses an alternative to both Italian perspective and antiperspective:

Incidentally, neither of those drawings is correct. The person who knows most about a table is probably a carpenter. If you gave him such a drawing, he would say, “Where are your measurements? How can I make a table of that?” So I would have to draw for him *Figure V*. He himself would draw it, if he were taking the measurements of the table. It shows the tabletop, its thickness, and the exact size and thickness of the legs. The carpenter knows that the table is not triangular or anything fancy and that those four angles are all at ninety degrees. From his point of view, this is a reasonable, well-drawn table, and I am very much in agreement with him. (Disney lectures I)

Again, far from being unnatural, the craftsman’s approach is normative in certain traditions:

In fact the carpenter’s way of drawing has been used by whole civilizations. The Mexican Indian, for example, does not understand any other way of drawing three-dimensional bodies, and there are similar things in Egyptian art, such as gardens bordered with trees seen in profile, *Figure X*. (Disney lectures I)

Charlot found in his Mexican audience an important response to this method:

I once made a drawing of a little Mexican Indian girl in an interior. There was a little straw mat at her feet, which I didn't draw completely, just the corner. There was a little window, which I drew whole on the wall, *Figure XI*. That was my Occidental idea of the picture. The Indian girl looked at it and said, "That's good." I pointed to the window and asked, "What is that?" She said, "It is that," and pointed to the rug. It is a very sound point of view, and it usually comes to civilizations whose people make their own objects themselves. The person who weaves the rug knows the shape by experience so well that it is represented that way. That is why the carpenter's case is sound. (Disney lectures I)

Charlot always stressed the similarities between fine art and other crafts: "The craftsman, who is going to do his picture the way a carpenter does his table, is going to look at that rectangle which will be his starting point" (Disney lectures II).

Besides antiperspective, Charlot uses the carpenter's devices to articulate his table. The downward diagonals of the table top are answered by the upward ones of the supporting boards underneath. The front supporting board is realistic, but the side one has been distorted by widening to fill the space created by using both the downward and upward diagonals. Put differently, the horizontal board on the left table side—which corresponds to the realistic one seen in front—is unrealistically widened at the back and slants inwards as it comes forwards in order to meet the front board at the correct width. This same distortion is used in the die on the right, the only one not rolling on its edge: the right side surface has been widened to touch the edges of the adjoining surfaces, a vertical echo of the table top. All the vertical elements of the table have been splayed out almost as in a carpenter's diagram. This is clear in the undersides of the supporting boards with the table leg rising from the bottom edge of the painting to meet the front board. Charlot is adapting the carpenter's devices to describe more of the table than possible in Italian perspective.

The goblet and dark blue cup are also described with a craftsman's device. The goblet's stem is placed slightly to the side of its top container section so the opening of the container is seen from up down and the stem and base from down up. The blue cup may be twisted for the same effect or the base may be seen through the glass of the side; Charlot is playing with ambiguity. Charlot is adapting a conventional two-dimensional diagram of a circular tube: a rectangle represents the side and two circles the open ends. In the painting *Checklist*, the ink sketch of the blue cup is even closer to the diagram. His modifications define his proposed distance from a craft diagram to high art. Charlot was intrigued by the result, using it in the shield of San Luis Potosí and for the *pneumatique* nose of his *Mental Portrait of Maples Arce*.

Charlot always kept one or more elements in his paintings that were visually expected, for instance, a true horizontal or vertical that emphasized or contrasted with his distortions. The stone inside of the window opening and the wooden window with its venetian blind, respectively on the left and right edges, seem to be in a sort of Italian perspective leading towards a background point. They are also

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painted comparatively realistically, especially in their textures. Both are closely connected to the interior section: the bottom two mortar lines of the stone wall touch interior lines of similar thickness and the third slat from the top of the venetian blind touches the bottom of the top horizontal bar of the chair. But the stone wall and window are not true verticals, both descending slightly towards the left. Partly as a result of this diagonal descent, their points of view do not match: the stones are seen slightly from down up—the horizontal mortar line at the bottom providing the point at which the viewer looks directly—and the slats of the venetian blind from up down. They thus emphasize the perspectival twist of the goblet. They also compress the space inward, which counters the forward spatial thrust created by the antiperspective of the table and the table leg, which protrudes into the space of the viewer. In the Checklist, the table pushes the window into the right edge of the painting, a force made visual in the two rolling dice on the *right*, a difference from the painting. Also, four, not three, mortar lines on the stone wall oppose the table thrust with stronger angles. Charlot is using this counterpoint to balance the created three-dimensional space and the two-dimensional flatness of the canvas, expressed also by the back wall of the room. A true horizontal is found in the bottom mortar line of the stone wall and a true vertical in the dark line at the left edge of the chair. The chair itself is painted more realistically—that is, in what could be considered Italian perspective—but Charlot tempers this effect by articulating it with the most painterly brushstrokes of the picture. Most elements in the painting permit balancing interpretations. Charlot has thus combined three perspectival systems into one painting that is unified in its effect. He has also integrated a craftsman's devices into a work of high art, devices that can be found both in Precolumbian and Mexican folk art.

Charlot had started the series of small oils on January 5, 1924. On January 23, 1925, Charlot felt for his own personal reasons, I believe, a need to push his stylistic exploration further than normal with his *Still-life with dice*. Probably shortly before that, on December 26, 1924, he had started the first of his “Larger size pictures, painted 1925”—CL 111–120b, December 1924 into January 1926—which he grouped separately from the small series:

111. *Luz, en buste, blue sky*. 28” X 22”.

Dated between December 26, 1924, and July 1925.

Glusker 2010: 484.

112. *Luz seated with basket*. 28” X 22” (Dark).

Dated between December 26, 1924, and July 1925.

113. *Landscape with Bridge. Cuernavaca. I*. Approx. 20” X 28”.

CL: “Painted July.”

Diary: title: *Las Brisas*.

Glusker 2010: 109.

Diary 1925: July 30, 31, August 2, 1925.

114. *Luz seated, child in arms*. 28” X 22”.

CL: "Painted October 1925."

Diary 1925: October 7, 8, 9, 10.

115. *Great Nude, Chalma. I.* 54" X 37".

116. *Luz, en buste, child on back, pink bonnet.* Approx. 28" X 22".

CL: "Painted October."

Diary 1925: October 23.

Glusker 2010: 443.

117. *Temascal (Steam Bath) I.* 28" X 22".

CL: "Painted November."

Diary 1925: November 2, "esquisse Temascal" 'sketch Temascal'? Charlot may have used the painting as a preparation for his lithograph of the same subject (M69), which he was also creating in November (the October dates of the Morse entry should be changed to November).

118. *Pintao with bowler hat.*

CL: "Painted November."

119. *La Nana (Nurse and child with toy).* 15 3/4" X 28".

CL: "Painted December."

Diary: title: *Luz et enfant au jouet.*

Diary 1925: December 31, 1925. Diary 1926: January 1, 2, 1926.

120b. *Portrait Anita Brenner.* 22" X 28".

Diary 1926: January 3, 1926, preparatory drawing; January 6, 7, 8, 1926, painting.

As seen above, Charlot departed from his usual chronological order to group the above paintings at the end of his entries for 1925. At the beginning of his creation of larger paintings, Charlot was also less clear in identifying the pictures in his diaries and leaves several undated in CL.²⁰⁹ The first large paintings that can be securely identified are CL 113 (July/August 1925) and CL 114 (October 1925), the first with both Luz and child. Assuming that the list is chronological, CL 111 and 112, with Luz alone, must then be dated between December 26, 1924, and July 1925. These larger oils were painted singly throughout the year. That is, Charlot did not move systematically from the small oils to the large ones. I believe the large paintings were the results of inner promptings like that for *Still-life with dice*. In the middle of his small oils, he occasionally felt impelled to work on a larger scale. Charlot described such an impulse to Anita Brenner:

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Me puse a pintar de puritita desesperacion : Una espalda (cuadro grande) y dos desnudos en un cuadro estilo grabados en madera. (“Yo se muy bien que no puedes escribir mucho”)

‘I set myself to paint out of a pure little desperation: a back (large size) and two nudes in one canvas, woodcut style.’

The large oils are clearly based on the small ones. The subjects are Luz, both at her daily tasks and nude, portraits, and a landscape. CL 117 *Temascal (Steam Bath) I* and CL 119 *La Nana (Nurse and child with toy)* are the only new subjects. The most information can be found about CL 113 *Landscape with Bridge. Cuernavaca*. From at least January 1922, on earlier trips to Cuernavaca, Charlot had often visited the small village Las Brisas—now termed a *fraccionamiento*” ‘urban development’—some ten minutes away.²¹⁰ His diary records painting subjects from the village that cannot be identified in the Checklist, perhaps works either lost or destroyed.²¹¹ Charlot seems to have admired one “beau Brisas” ‘beautiful Brisas’ by another artist (Diary 1923: November 20). Charlot had painted three small oils of the village that survive: CL 78 *Plaza or Brisas à maisons* ‘Brisas with houses’ (December 22, 1924; Glusker 2010: 531); CL 79 *City Dump or Brisas à ordures* ‘Brisas with garbage’ (December 23, 1924); and CL 81 *Landscape with donkeys or Brisas à trois fenêtres* ‘Brisas with three windows’ (January 13, 1925; Glusker 2010: 605). The first two are the basis of his lithograph *Plaza* (M131), whose inclusion in *Picture Book* (1933) identifies it as one of his regular subjects. On July 30, Charlot began the large oil CL 113—called “grand Brisas” in the diary—which he finished on August 2. The village appears in the far middle distance, and in front of it is a section of the new road. Charlot explained his interest:

It is much rarer to think of landscapes in terms of geometry, both in two and three dimensions, than other subject matter. By our inner knowledge of the human body, we know that we are an architecture. So it is not astonishing to see human bodies treated architecturally. But we have been so accustomed to the Impressionist landscape that we do not start thinking of nature in terms either of mechanics or geometry.

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

it. There is in there a little bit of mechanics, and I thought it was a rather unusual example, being a landscape. (Disney lectures VII)

Charlot painted an even larger version in 1932: CL 303 *Landscape with Bridge*, 20" X 36".

The larger formats enable Charlot to display his monumentalism (e.g., CL 115 *Great Nude, Chalma. I*) and include more figures (*Temascal*). The vertical formats used for the figures of Luz pull her proportions away from the squat ones of the smaller oils towards those used in the fresco *Lavanderas*. All these larger oils are major works and form a basis for Charlot's later work on Mexican subjects. Indeed, Charlot considered the larger paintings the beginning of a different period of his work. In his letter of October 27, 1925, to Walter Pach, Charlot probably over-emphasized the difference because he suspected that Pach—who had not mentioned him by name in his 1922 article—did not like his earlier work:

Je n'ai aucun intérêt à garder cette cinquantaine de tableaux ici. Ils forment un groupe homogène ainsi qu'une série d'études et de dessins qui les ont précédé. Depuis, j'ai évolué tant que je suis actuellement à l'extrême opposé de ce style. Je vous envoie par courrier 4 photos de mes dernières œuvres. Vous verrez l'évolution.

Je peins beaucoup et suis tourné vers l'avenir. C'est pour cela que je considère ce groupe d'œuvres passées comme ne faisant plus partie de moi-même et je puis m'en éloigner sans le ressentir.

'I have no interest in keeping these fifty or so pictures here. They form a homogenous group along with a series of studies and drawings that preceded them. Since then, I have evolved to the point that I am now at the extreme opposite of this style.

'I am sending you by post four photos of my latest works. You will see the evolution.

'I paint a great deal and am turned towards the future. For that reason I consider this group of earlier works as no longer forming a part of myself, and I can distance myself from them without regret.'

Charlot would have moved forward immediately with this new period, but the Carnegie Institute of Washington offered him a position as staff artist for the excavations at Chich'en Itza, Yucatan, and he came under a whole new set of influences.

8.2.4. PROCESS PRINT ILLUSTRATIONS

Charlot had been publishing process prints of his art in newspapers and journals. But in 1925 he began a project that would become a major activity for the rest of his life: book illustrations. Anita Brenner had been collecting the *cuentos* 'tales' of Luz Jiménez, and Charlot was to provide the illustrations. Charlot was also working with Brenner on *Idols* and articles, so the references in his diary

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are not always clear.²¹² His letters to Brenner are the main source for the project, which continued until the publication of Brenner's *The Boy Who Could Do Anything* in 1942.

Charlot had many motives for joining the project:

I am very desirous myself to publish the story book, specially because Luz writes me that she badly needs the money. I about arranged with Sheed and Ward, 63 5th Ave for it. They have the drawings. You could go or write there to Miss. M. Hunt who knows about it. My only change from the original plan would be to include a few stories that you had excluded, because I am very fond of my drawings for them (the choice of drawings that Sheed has is my choice for the stories).

Also to split whatever money would be coming in 3 parts, so as to send some to Luz. I would like also to have a hand in designing the book, having done pretty well with the Amelia del Rio book.²¹³

But Charlot was personally committed to the book. He complained:

de tu silencio sobre el libro este, por considerarlo un poco como *nuestro* libro. (no te enojas, verdad.) (“J’ai reçu une jolie lettre de toi”; also “The few days you stayed here”)

‘of your silence about this book, because I consider it a little *our* book. (don’t get angry, right).’

Charlot’s role was larger than an illustrator’s. Because of his friendship with Luz, Charlot seems to have been involved in the collection and selection of the tales to be included in the final book: “Luz vino pero no trajo nada de cuentos nuevos” ‘Luz came but brought no new tales’ (JC to AB February 2, 1925). He even sent Brenner “2 cuentos folkloricos” ‘two folkloric tales’ from Yucatán (“Your first letter was a great pleasure”). Some of the tales were “not for children,” suggesting that the collection was bigger than the publication (“Your last letters are something sad”). At one point, Frances Toor appeared to be trying to steal the project:

I send you voluminosos cuentos de Luz. She refused to show me the cuentos. Harias buen mandarle dinero (excuse libertad) but Francis la esta sobornando pa’ que le cuente algo. Luz told me suavemente she would tell Francis only the things you know. Imagine. Me dio dolor al corazon. Francis would publish it, *transformado*, immediately y no podria servir mas. De otro lado este año no puedo emplear Luz de modelo and she is poor. (“Vente por aqui”; also March 19, 1925)

‘I send you voluminous tales from Luz. She refused to show me the cuentos. You would do well to send her money (excuse the liberty), but Frances is suborning her to tell some tale. Luz told me smoothly she would tell Francis only the things you know. Just imagine. It gave me a heartache. Frances would publish it transformed immediately and it could no longer serve for anything. On the other side, I cannot employ Luz as a model this year, and she is poor.’

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As seen in the above quotation, Luz *wrote* the tales for Brenner but could *tell* them to others. Since Brenner spoke no Náhuatl, the language used by Luz to write the tales was in all likelihood Spanish. But Luz would have started from Náhuatl originals, which she may or may not have written down. Notices are unfortunately vague: e.g., “The last tales written by Luz are very beautiful. I red Dr Boas is author of a book ‘Tales from Milpalta.’ Do you know them” (“Your last letters are something sad”). Luz did have some written materials in Náhuatl, as Charlot wrote to Brenner: “*Muy importante: Mandame texto azteca del poema Luz, el del comal*” (“Me hizo mucho la noticia muerte Amado”; also “Received a good letter”). After her death, her tales retold in Náhuatl were published, but their relationship to those used by Brenner has yet to be studied (Jiménez, Horcasitas, and O. de Ford 1979: 5 ff. [Horcasitas], 170).

Charlot always felt that Luz should have been credited as author or an author of what he called the “Luz book” (“I did not write you for a little while”). Brenner did publish that she herself had “Retold” the tales, not composed or translated them, and described Luz in “Luz, the Story-Teller” (Brenner 1942: title page, 6).

Related to the language problem was that of culture: how to present Mexican elements to United States children. Charlot argued for the inclusion of a “pequeno vocabulario ilustrado” ‘little illustrated glossary’ so that explanations would not intrude on the original stories (“Excuse the paper”). He was always interested in such works, but as in this case, was never authorized to complete one.

Because of the length and uncertainty of the project, basic decisions were difficult to make and could change: such as the size and shape of the book, the color or colors of the paper and ink, whether or not his original drawings would be reduced in the printing, and so on.²¹⁴ Charlot’s letters are full of questions and proposed solutions. Charlot keeps on working even though the lack of final decisions might necessitate his doing the illustrations all over again (“Business : *I know*”). On her side, Brenner complained that the illustrations were not arriving quickly enough (JC to AB May 8, 1925).

These letters are important as early witnesses to Charlot’s views on many technical details and esthetic effects. As seen in volume 1, Charlot had been interested in the peculiar problems of book illustrations since childhood, such as communicating to a particular audience and fitting image to text. Recently he had illustrated Maples Arce’s *URBE* (1924). Such decisions were esthetic more than practical:

teniendo en cuenta, sobre todo la buena distribution de los grabados adentro del libro.
(February 12, 1925)

‘taking into account above all the good distribution of the prints inside the book.’

I send you two cliches done for Francis’ magazine de este modo [‘this way’] : It can be done but you see, I would have to simplify more and it would take off the best qualities of the drawings as I send them to you : This is a certain

“individualisazion” [*sic*] coming from accumulation of certain little details that I would be obliged to suppress and sobre todo [above all] a certain “nobleness” or

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“serenidad” [‘serenity’] that one cannot give with el trazo ancho [‘wide stroke’].
 (“Just a word about the size”)

The illustrations demanded as much artistic inspiration as his other work:

Entonces voy a seguir haciendolos porque actualmente tengo inspiracion y hay que aprovechar. (JC to AB April 27, 1925)

‘So I am going to continue doing them because at the moment I have inspiration and must take advantage of it.’

That you have difficulties there with editors I can easily imagine and thank you because I know you do it also a little for me. If I am working on the cuentos it is not para “imponerte” los dibujos [‘to impose the drawings on you’] but just because I have inspiration. (JC to AB “Your last letters are something sad”)

Because I am now in good dispositions to finish this, y quien sabe mas tarde [‘who knows later’]. (March 29, 1925)

Charlot was frustrated when technical decisions were postponed, like selection, size, colors, and so on:

a *list* (complete) of the cuentos you are sure to print. You don’t realize how hard it is to get excited on a work you are not sure to be used, and impossible to work well without excitement! (“Received your letter where you speak of the sketches”)

Charlot could never think of such illustrations as commercial art:

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

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

You remember that my idea was to do a work perfectly good in my own opinion y presentable bajo mi nombre [‘under my name’]. (“Excuse the paper”)

Charlot felt that he was creating a new kind of children’s book illustrations, different from the general realistic styles of the time:

Now, to look at it objectively, we have not to do *as usual*. Your cuentos, you know it perfectly are a little more than children’s tales. So my drawing[s] have to be a little more than normal children’s pictures. (April 8, 1925)

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Charlot had great respect for children as readers and wrote to Brenner about his work with them in words he would repeat in much later writings:

I hope you find them good on the point of lisibility [*sic*] and also mexicanism. I did my best in that way because I was working for children and my only criterium [*sic*] was to get into the tale as they do when the[y] read, and draw in accord with it.
 (“Received your letter where you speak of the sketches”)

Charlot was worried about the reaction of United States publishers: “it [h]as a great defect. It is the first thing in its style and I am sure editors shall get afraid” (“Business : *I know*”). As seen in the previous chapter, Charlot urged Brenner to seek Walter Pach’s advice and support. He also told her she would have to “hacer la guerra” ‘go to war’ for the book and retire temporarily from the project if it could not be executed correctly (“Just a word about the size”; April 8, 1925).

The illustrations would be line drawings without three-dimensional modeling, a technique that required care to be effective:

No puedo [‘I cannot’] because it would be a sin against plastic. My black and white drawings are complete as they are. It would be desequilibrar-los [‘to unbalance them’] to put color on it. (April 8, 1925)

Other considerations are for big size : The drawings get their full intensity. It makes a less thick volume and children doesn’t like thick books. They prefer cuadernos [‘notebooks’]. (“Just a word about the size”)

Thus the choice of line drawing impacted the design of the book:

The illustrations in the text cannot get their intensity for being to[o] near it and obligan a hacer linas [*sic*] de texto irregulares lo que es poco agradable para leer [‘force us to make irregular text lines, which is little agreeable to read’]. I would only do some ornaments for typographic needs. I am working hard on that, so I would be sure of material details. (“Just a word about the size”)

The above plan of printing text and illustration on facing pages was adopted by Charlot in designing and illustrating Amelia del Rio’s *The Sun, the Moon, and a Rabbit* (1935). Another related idea he considered was varying line and page colors:

los 2 ultimos son el caso de los 2 primeros pero empleando como cliché el *negativo* del dibujo en ves del positivo. Bonito para efectos de noche. (“Como me gusta el articulo”; also “Received your letter where you speak of the sketches”)
 ‘the last two are the same case of the first two but using as printing block the *negative* of the drawing instead of the positive. Pretty for night affects.’

The Boy Who Could Do Anything established Charlot as a children’s book illustrator, but also type-cast him:

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I think my first illustrations were in Mexico, in the 20's, at the same time that I was doing my murals there. And they were done mostly because they were illustrations of Indian stories that I had heard told by my Indian friends and I wanted very much to bring out a visual equivalent of the words that I had been told. And from then on I have been labeled by publishers as the fellow brown people in it, they ask me to illustrate it. It doesn't matter where the brown people are. It can be perhaps Cuba, Peru, or Mexico sometimes. I'm the fellow who is in charge of the brown people. It is a good thing because I like to do it. (1961 Interview with Lesley and Hollis)

8.3.

WRITING

I have studied and used Charlot's writings extensively and do not want to repeat myself in this section.²¹⁵ I will merely sketch his writing as a major part of his activity in this period.

I have discussed Charlot's French period poetry in Volume 1, Chapter 4. In Mexico through 1922, Charlot was still as active, but his production began to diminish until he composed only on rare occasions. The following are the numbers from "Recueils Faits Par Jean Charlot":

1922: 49 + 1 in "D'Autres Poèmes 1911–1922"

1923: 8 of which 4 are long, including *XX Proses*

1924: 4 of which 2 are long

1925: 18 of which 1 is long

1926: 6

1927: 3

1928: 4 of which 2 are different versions of one long poem

In France, Charlot's poems can be divided between conventional ones in which he is venting his emotions and problems—of mostly biographical and historical interest—and a few that are original in form and content. In Mexico, a few poems repeat the conventional religious language, thoughts, and weaknesses of his worst earlier production.²¹⁶ The best poem, written for Rivera's *Creation* in 1923—*XX Proses Suivant la Psychoplastie de D. M. Rivera A l'usage des Aveugles et des Gens Du Monde* (referred to as *XX Proses*)—is in free verse.

Charlot was still using poetry for venting, expressing emotions and worries that he did not discuss with others but that can be found in other writings of his. In *Adolescent, j'ai connu l'âpre vie au camp* of January 21, 1922, he described—as he did in France—the emotional displacement he felt after his war experiences and his disappointment in the poor reception of his artworks inspired by the conflict.²¹⁷ A number of poems explore his religious difficulties (Chapter 5). In *Apologue. L'Enfant a dit*: "Je veux travailler. Je sais bien of March 17, 1922, he writes that his childhood desire to be good made him into an old man: *Le grave des vieillards, très jeune, il le fit sien* 'very young, he made his own the gravity of old men': *il s'isola des jeux, des femmes et des chiens* 'he isolated himself from games, women, and dogs.' One day, he woke up to find his youth dead and his life trapped in a pose:

Telle l'aube. Au jour, triste, il sut qu'il était dupe.
 mais il ne goûtait plus les danses, et les jupes
 l'étonnaient ; il lui fallut garder le Masque
 'Such was the dawn. At day, sad, he knew he had been a dupe.
 but he no longer enjoyed dancing, and skirts
 shocked him; he had to keep his Mask...'

After being raised as "*l'enfant riche*" 'the rich kid,' Charlot felt keenly his poverty, which alienated his former friends and prevented him from marrying: "*solitaire et célibataire*" 'solitary and celibate.' In *Enfant j'ai dégusté des laits précieux, avec*, composed between January 16 and 21, 1922, he writes: "*j'eus de vrais amis, maintenant signeurs de chèques*" 'I had true friends, now signers of checks.' One had just cut him in the street. In *J'y pense: Mes camarades qu'est-ce qu'ils firent?* of August 1923, Charlot wonders how his old schoolmates from Condorcet are doing. They have led the bourgeois life and are married with a good bank account. In contrast, "*je n'ai pas été raisonnable : J'ai peint*" 'I have not been reasonable: I painted.' Why should he complain? But the solitary life is very heavy. Most important, his old friends live their comfortable life in complete confidence that they will be rewarded with the heaven of their imagination.

Mais aussi, la vie à porter très seul, c'est lourd.
 Après que sera-ce ? Eux coïtent dans des linges
 fins, sûr d'avoir au Ciel leur prie-Dieu en velours !
 'But also, leading one's life very much alone—it's heavy.
 What will come after? They copulate between fine sheets,
 sure of having in heaven their prie-Dieu in velvet !'

The majority of the Mexican poems—though still in conventional forms like sonnets—are at a higher stylistic level than his French work. His language is compressed and intensified, and he concatenates an unusual number of striking images in a single poem. In doing this, he is extending in his work the influence of Claudel, his major model in France, with his rich, dense language and often unusual images. Charlot also seems to be absorbing into his work two new influences.

The first was Luis de Góngora whose *A la fábula de Faetón, que compuso el conde de Villamediana* Charlot translated between January 31 and February 2, 1922 (n.d. Poèmes Choisis). Góngora was being revived in Europe at the time, and a poem of his was published by Maples Arce in 1925 (Monahan 1981: 120). From the Contemporáneos group, Torres Bodet was also an admirer (1961: 220 f.). Charlot's "*Ne savoir*" *nulle créature*—placed immediately before the translation—is *Gongorista* in its hermetic compression, contorted syntax, and combination of Biblical and Classical references (1920–1924 Civil). Other *Gongorista* characteristics found in Charlot's poems are short words and phrases separated by commas, odd interrupted grammar, and the placing of a single word within quotation marks. Charlot adopted some images from Góngora—like caresses being wounds—that are found in the Spanish poetry of the time (e.g., *J'y pense: Mes camarades qu'est-ce qu'ils firent?* [1923]). He must also

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have felt supported by Góngora's high-minded sense of artistic vocation. Charlot remained enthusiastic. I remember him reciting to me the couplet:

Las venas con poca sangre,
 los ojos con mucha noche (Góngora 1982: 281)
 'The veins with little blood,
 The eyes with much night.'

The second new influence, I argue, was the greatest Mexican *Gongorista*, Sor Juana de la Cruz, the namesake of Saint Juan de la Cruz or John of the Cross, whom Charlot had admired in France for his use of popular poetry to express the mystical relationship with God. Charlot recited to me her *Procura Desmentir los Elogios que a un Retrato de la Poetisa Inscribió la verdad, que Llama Pasión* and played humorously on it in his *Enfant j'ai dégusté des laits précieux*:²¹⁸

M'acheminer solitaire et célibataire
 vers ce terreau goulé, sans monocle, sans gants
 sans maîtresse, sans ami, sans or, sans notaire.
 'To direct myself, solitary and celibate,
 towards that gluttonous compost without a monocle, without gloves
 without a mistress, without friends, without gold, without a notary.'

Charlot's new compression of language is evident in the very first poems of his 1920–1924 Civil: Paris–Mexico: *Distique* and *Quatrain*. When asked to contribute poems to *Contemporâneos*, Charlot selected some older poems and made the wording more compact, vivid, and hermetic; more dense with meaning and universal.²¹⁹ Charlot was using other devices as well like running sentences over several verses to break up the impression of regular lines (e.g., *Ce bleu baroque d'hors ces nuages maussades...* [1920–1924 Civil; May 1922]). He never lost his obsession with wordplay: e.g., *car rien/ne déracinera ce désir icarien* 'for nothing/will deracinate this Icarian desire' (*Vivre charnel avec des lèvres sur ma bouche* [1920–1924 Civil; June 21, 1921]).

Charlot deploys a large number of expressive images in his Mexico poems, which add to their interest. A few examples from 1920–1924 Civil:

Seigneur prenez pitié de cette chair grossière (January 10, 1922):

l'âme s'immerge aux croisières
 glauques, aux mains des morts gonflés de sel
 'the soul sinks in the glaucous cruisings
 in the hands of the dead swollen with salt.'

Seigneur, pourquoi m'avoir cousu ce cœur farouche (January 11, 1922)

vous "jouez parmi les enfants des hommes" et
 moi je vaque parmi eux caduque et lésé,
 vieillard qui ne sait plus jouer avec les gosses.

'you "play among the children of men" and
me, I am vacant among them, decrepit and wounded,
an oldster who no longer knows how to play with kids.'

Il me faut racheter ce désert d'apparences (January 12, 1922)

Mais elles me sont plus lointaines que vos saints ;
mes bras exaspérés battant l'air vers leurs seins
lourds, n'étreignent que ces arts et littérature.

'But they are further from me than your saints;
My exasperated arms, beating the air towards their heavy
breasts, clasp only these arts and literature.'

Débile proie à mes mâchoires de Tantale (January 14, 1922)

'Feeble prey for my Tantalus jaws'

Ça n'est pas très intéressant mais c'est ma vie..... (February 10, 1922): God is an ogre

il me vide, m'embroche, me tourne, m'ensauce,
ma peau mordore, il me berce pour m'égoutter ;
Prions toujours.

"Celui qui prie, Dieux l'exauce."

'He guts me, spits me, turns me, bastes me with sauce,
My skin browns, he rocks to drain me;
Let us still pray.

"For who prays God has a response."

Saint Sebastiano de Apparicio (November 14, 1922)

Etant peintre, il me déplairait fort, noble athlète,
m'assoupissant près d'un au moins joli péché,
de m'éveiller côte à côte avec un squelette.

'Being a painter, it would displease me greatly, noble athlete,
Falling asleep next to an at least pretty sin,
To wake up side-by-side with a skeleton.'

In the better poems, Charlot's new, racy style achieves a blistering sarcasm contorted by showy intelligence.²²⁰ In *Seigneur, vous m'avez mis des femmes en travers* (August 1923), he depicts an old man, in whom women no longer have hopes:

Et sûr qu'avec un tel régime, dans dix ans
tu deviendras un vieux garçon insupportable,
exact aux processions du Dimanche, disant
du mal des filles et t'attardant trop à table,

Traînant ton passé comme une croix dure au dos ;
Puant cette odeur fade dont dit Courteline²²¹
de rance, de linges, de langes, de latrines.

‘And sure that with such a regime, in ten years
you will become an unbearable old bachelor,
punctilious about Sunday processions, speaking
ill of young women and staying too long at table,

Dragging your past like a hard cross on your back;
Smelling of that stale smell that Courteline describes:
of rancidness, linens, diapers, and latrines.

The main target of Charlot’s sarcasm was his former self, his immature ideals and longings. Prominent among these was his desire for a rustic Catholic wife who would help him spiritually: “élever jusqu’au ciel deux simples” ‘to raise as far as heaven two simple people.’²²² Using the image of fencing, Charlot describes God Himself destroying *ce paradis de carton* ‘this cardboard paradise.’ Charlot also makes fun of his poems’ self-dramatizing venting in *Comme on est seul, Seigneur, parmi vos créatures* (May 6, 1923):

Au réel, je gagne des sous,
ai des amis, vêt un veston, soigne mes grippes,
communie, mange à ma faim et dore mon souûl.

In reality, I earn my pence,
have friends, put on a jacket, nurse my grippes,
take communion, eat till I’m done, and sleep as long as I like.

With few exceptions—like the *Contemporâneos* contributions—Charlot kept his poetry private. But, as discussed in Volume 1, Chapter 4, Charlot did show some of his poems to friends with varied responses. List Arzubide told me that he had admired my father’s poems while he was still in Mexico, so he was in all likelihood accepted by the Estridentistas as a poet as well as an artist. Charlot was exceptional in being accepted by both competing groups of poets.

Charlot’s outstanding poem of this period is *XX Proses Suivant la Psychoplastie de D. M. Rivera A L’usage des Aveugles et des Gens Du Monde 1923* (1923 XX Prose.). Written for the official inauguration of *Creation* on March 9 or perhaps for the informal, more collegial gathering on March 20, no record survives of a public reading of the poem as a whole or in part (*MMR* 145 ff.). However, *XX Proses* was clearly intended for publication—in fact, the typescript is in layout form—but for some reason never was. Similarly, Charlot’s prose defense of Rivera, “Sur Diego qu’on Empêchait de Peindre,” remained unpublished.²²³

Charlot established the text of *XX Proses* when I was making typed copies of his papers in the early 1970s. The poems are written in free verse without the restrictions of form that were usually an

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obstacle for Charlot. Instead, Charlot allows the form to arise from the unconstrained expression. Charlot has been influenced by Rimbaud's prose poetry—thus *Proses*—but the influence of Claudel is revealed by the irregular colometry along with the dense lines rich in sound and content. *XX Proses* is an ephrastic poem—a poetic interpretation of an art work—like the *Poèmes Ecphrastiques* Charlot had composed in France (1918). The viewer enters into a dialogue with the artwork and thus the artist. The ideas of both the artist and the viewer interact. Charlot had assisted Rivera on *Creation* and had certainly discussed the mural with him. But Charlot's own ideas dominate the poem. For instance, on the title page, Charlot states that the poem is an instruction guide for the blind and the “gens du monde” ‘society, the mundane.’ For Charlot, the opposite of the blind mundanity was holy poverty.

In the earliest version of *XX Proses*, the allegorical figures are organized in three groups, “Les Inférieures, Les Moyennes, Les Supérieures” ‘Inferior, Middling, Superior,’ presented antiphonally leading to “Dieu” ‘God.’ Charlot then simplifies the grouping to two: “Solaires” ‘Solar’ and “Lunaires” ‘Lunar.’ He proceeds upwards towards God first in the Solar group, then in the Lunar, and ends with a section on God. The description of each figure is extremely rich, departing from an individual presentation into a meditation that includes art, Classical religion, and Christianity. Just as genuine art is a product of thinking and emotion, so human beings are a combination of masculine and feminine, logic and intuition, wisdom and love. Only when the pairs unite do procreation and creation, wisdom and art, result. This is “le moment de Dieu” ‘the moment of God,’ the ultimate unity. In this universe of finite limits, the poles of each pair can conflict, but they tend back towards their infinite source and forwards to their limitless end. Charlot traces the comprehensiveness of *Creation* to the mind of the artist, who had to employ the depicted virtues for its achievement (John Charlot 1997: 118).

Charlot produced a variety of prose writings during his early years in Mexico. These can be grouped into descriptions of his first impressions—“Mexico” (October 1922), “Les Arrivées au Mexique” (1921), and “México de los Humildes” (1922)—and autobiographical writings, like diaries and notes, e.g., in the 1920–1924 Ludwigshafen Notebook. Three early critical essays—“De la Critique et des Peintres” (October-December 1922), “Conseils du Peintre à un Client Possible” (October-December 1922), “Des Diverses Sortes de Mauvais Peintres” (December 1922)—addressed social and technical problems faced by the young artists and muralists; they were not published in their original form but were used in other articles. Other writings were focused on technical problems and reveal Charlot's pedagogical role: “Fresque. couleurs” et “pancarte” and “Exercices sur les lignes” et “Exercices sur les valeurs” in 1918–1923 Notebook C: Notes sur l'Art and the additions to 1920–1922 *Traité de Peinture*.

The best known essays are those on art history and contemporary art in Mexico, which were appreciated at the time and continue to be quoted in relevant publications today. The essays are both historical documents and bases for continuing discussion. First, Charlot's essays were important for the self-understanding of the artists themselves. Carlos Mérida recorded the artists' surprise that Charlot could write about them correctly while they were still in the process of working; he saw what they were doing and why:

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Juan fue siempre un gran escritor sobre arte. Él tiene una clarividencia extraordinaria para definir, para juzgar y para escribir. Y como yo lo dije antes, Juan era en este “trait”, en este camino, en esta condición, uno de los directores del movimiento con más capacidad y con más influencia por el hecho de que era un culto europeo capaz de discernir, de definir, de enseñar, de modelar, de explicar todo lo que nosotros hacíamos y que nosotros conociésemos exactamente por qué y cuándo aquello se hacía. (January 29, 1971)

‘Jean was always a great writer on art. He had an extraordinary clairvoyance for defining, judging, and writing. And as I said before, Juan was in this trait, in this path, in this condition, one of the directors of the movement with more capacity and influence because of the fact that he was a cultivated European capable of discerning, defining, teaching, modeling, explaining all that we others were doing so that we ourselves knew exactly why that was being done and at the very time it was being done.’

Clarita Guerrero, wife of Xavier, wrote Charlot on November 25, 1971, asking him to write an article on her husband:

Tú eres el que mejor conoce a Xavier, el que más penetra en su pintura y quien mejor puede escribir sobre ella...

‘You are the one who knows Xavier best, the one who penetrated most into his painting and who best can write about it...’

Charlot’s essays provided also publicity and defense for the artists and muralists. In the words of Stefan Baciu, Charlot “fue un defensor decidido del muralismo no solo con el pincel sino con la pluma” ‘was a decided defender of muralism not only with the drawing pencil but with the writing pen’ (1982: 24).

A section of Charlot’s 1923 diary reveals how productively he could write:

“article sur gravure sur bois” ‘article on woodcut’ (July 15)

“donné article à Democrata sur Pintao” ‘gave article to El Democrata on Pintao’ (August 3)

“paru article Pintao” ‘article on Pintao appeared’ (August 5)

“fini pièce Merida” ‘finished piece on Mérida’ (August 24)

Although Charlot always included important information and judgment in his writings and often provided photographs and other help in their publication, he could put more effort into an essay that coincided with an important occasion and had more promise of permanency, like “Prólogo como Presentación de un Grupo de Grabadores en Madera” for the exhibition catalogue of children’s woodcuts edited by the artist and teacher Carlos Orozco, *Los Pequeños Grabadores en Madera—Alumnos de la Escuela Preparatoria de Jalisco—Prólogo de Juan Charlot—Treinta Grabados* (Charlot 1925 Prólogo). Charlot had written the article first in French, “Prologue, ou Présentation d’un Groupe de Graveurs sur Bois” (1924–1925), and then worked with Mona Salas on the Spanish (Diary: October 20, 21 1924). He then provided a copy of the

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prologue to the press and published a condensed version in *El Universal Ilustrado* of March 12, 1925, and a general appreciation, “El Grabado en Madera y los Artistas Tapatíos” in the same journal on July 23, 1925.²²⁴ Charlot was doing publicity for a worthy cause, and newspapers were happy to have his contributions.

Charlot often collaborated with others, like Claude Blanchard (September 16, 1922) and Anita Brenner, and provided research content for newspaper interviews and stories, like that with Juan Rafael Vera de Córdova on prints (June 1, 1922). A most important instance is the series of articles by Juan Hernández Araujo, “El Movimiento Actual de la Pintura en México” (July 11 August 2, 1923), a pseudonym of Charlot and Siqueiros. Charlot and his mother had moved in with Siqueiros in early June (Diary June 8, 9 1923). The two artists spent many hours discussing art and art history. From his great story-teller friend, Charlot gathered much information he would later use in his *MMR* and other writings. On July 1, 1923 (Diary), they started writing the Araujo series as a *tour d’horizon* of the contemporary art scene in Mexico and a defense of muralism (*MMR* index). The Araujo series has been extensively, but not exhaustively, discussed, and I refer the reader to a previous discussion of mine and references above.²²⁵

A biographical point is that Manuel Rodríguez Lozano and Abraham Ángel, both of whom had attended the earlier inauguration of Charlot’s *Massacre*, wrote in protest against being grouped with *ballets russes* picturesque artists (1923). Whatever the justice of the critique, the hurt tone of the two artists was unmistakable. Unlike Siqueiros, Charlot was not to attack another contemporary artist in print, but strove to write as positively as he possible could.

Charlot refrained even from defending himself. When word reached him that Renato Molina Enriquez had written an attack on the *Massacre*, “El ‘Fresco’ de Charlot en la Escuela Preparatoria,”²²⁶ he tried a personal approach:

vu Molina qui a écrit article fort méchant sur moi. A M. il vient voir mes dessins.
résolution : laisser Dieu me défendre (Diary April 25, 1923)

‘saw Molina who has written a very mean article about me. A.M. he comes to see my drawings. resolution: let God defend me.’

Charlot was hurt when the article appeared the next day and offered up the pain: “paraît un article horrible sur moi dans l’*Universal Ilustrado* [*sic*] merci mon dieu” ‘a horrible article about me appeared in the *Universal Ilustrado* Thank you, God’ (Diary April 26, 1923). Two days later he was preparing “un riposte pour Molina” ‘a riposte for Molina’ (Diary April 28, 1923). But he never published his “Réponse à Molina” (April 1923), although he may have shown it to friends. The “Réponse” is an important contemporary document for understanding Charlot’s message in the *Massacre* and the artistic means he used to express it.

Charlot’s bibliography reveals that he wrote for a variety of publications: newspapers, reviews, catalogues, and so on. His work, however, was prominently absent from *El Machete*, which he considered the greatest contribution of the Sindicato and noted in his diary (*MMR* 245; Diary March 6,

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June 14, 1924). However, Charlot did write an article for the journal that was to be illustrated by his woodblock *Los Ricos en el Infierno* (M56; Diary June 29, 1924). Charlot wrote in his journal of March 21, 1924: “dictier article à maman pour Machete” ‘dictated article to mama for Machete.’ The article has not survived, but Charlot explained that his woodcut was joining his Christian concerns with those of his Marxist friends: “None of us had much love for the rich” (M56). Charlot may have intended his February 1924 “D. Alfaro Siqueiros” for *El Machete*,²²⁷ but an augmented version of it appeared in *Forma* (November–December 1926) as “David Alfaro Siqueiros: Un Verdadero Rebelde en Arte” under Anita Brenner’s name.

Charlot’s biggest project was a catalogue raisonné of the prints of José Guadalupe Posada to be published by that artist’s employer, the firm of Vanegas Arroyo. Don Antonio had been Posada’s employer, and Charlot knew his widow, Doña Carmen, and their son Don Blas. Charlot’s enthusiasm for the printmaker is expressed in a letter of advice to Anita Brenner:

Entre los recién muertos don’t forget

Posadas (Guadalupe.) : He worked his whole life for Vanegas Arroyo and specially [*sic*] his last things are de 1st quality. I send you a proof a reproducir del tamaño. Es caricaturista pero como Daumier when serious of the deepest tragic (. I want you very much to reproduce his thing. Sera una revelacion.)

He came from Guanajuato like Diego and worked in a little shop near San Carlos, with, as a protest against the academic art of that time, a reproduction of the Last Judgement of Michel Angelo at his “aparador.”

‘Among the recently deceased, don’t forget:

Posadas, Guadalupe: He worked his whole life for Vanegas Arroyo and especially his last things are of the first quality. I send you a proof to reproduce at scale. He was a caricaturist like Daumier, when serious, of the deepest tragic. (I want you very much to reproduce his thing. It will be a revelation.)

He came from Guanajuato like Diego and worked in a little shop near San Carlos, with, as a protest against the academic art of that time, a reproduction of the Last Judgment of Michelangelo in his shop window.’²²⁸

The first mention in Charlot’s diary is of May 16, 1924: “ministère pour voir Vanegas Arroyo” ‘to the ministry to see Vanegas Arroyo.’ The place of the meeting suggests that government support was being sought, probably from Bellas Artes, which is mentioned on November 28, 1925. On December 14, 1924, Charlot printed his first engraving at the workshop and thanked God for the start of the project: “matin. tiré gravure chez Arroyo merci mon Dieu” ‘morning. pulled an engraving at Arroyo’s thank you, God.’ From then on, the diary reports numerous meetings and work sessions with Vanegas Arroyo: “travail V. A. à l’édition” ‘work V. A. on the edition.’²²⁹ Charlot always treasured collaborating with the Vanegas Arroyo firm. He commented on a print he made with Don Arsacio, Don Blas’s son:

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This is my pride and joy because it was done with the Vanegas Arroyo firm. I have known the family for three generations, very well...I very much wanted to do something with Posada's own publishers. (M484)

Before he left for Yucatan, Charlot had started producing materials for the catalogue, now in the JCC. He started by making prints of all the plates in the workshop, likely sharing the work with the staff. At this point, he did not attempt to separate Posada's prints, but included prints later identified as Manuel Manilla's, vignettes of clearly European origin, and so on. The lack of title or information on some prints shows that they had lost their original context and were simply being stored. The prints were made on thin paper that was then glued to a thicker and larger sheet with room for notes. As information accumulated about a print, especially titles, cut paper labels could be glued to the sheet as well. Initials at the bottom of a sheet might indicate the primary researcher or source. Charlot often started by describing the subject in French and then adding the Spanish caption. He could note the condition of the plate: "Très abîmé" 'Very damaged' (P 139-87 [folder 4]). He was attentive to identifying states, sometimes needing to add paper for a much-used item (P 12093 [folder 4]). He could add information from the oral tradition when he lacked physical evidence: "Es una replica de un Z del mismo asunto que ha [*sic*: ya] no existe" 'It is a replica of a lost zinc of the same subject' (P 143-94 [folder 4]). He also began the work of attribution, writing on one sheet "probably by the son of Posada."

Charlot did research on political cartooning in earlier Mexican publications for the catalogue: "Bibl Nat : V. A etc El Ahuizote" 'National Library: Vanegas Arroyo, etc. *El Ahuizote*' (December 18, 1925). Work on the edition apparently involved reassuring and encouraging Vanegas Arroyo and his family: "conversation avec les V." 'conversation with the Vanegas Arroyos' (August 1, 1925); "matin : V. A. et B. A. je l'assure pour édition [?] et Posadas" 'morning: Vanegas Arroyo and Bellas Artes. I assure him for the edition of [?] and Posadas' (November 28, 1925). Charlot became close to the family: "chez V A les femmes nous reçoivent très gentiment" 'at V. A.'s, the women receive us very kindly' (August 31, 1927).

Charlot was also involving Vanegas Arroyo in wider publication: "vu Vanegas Arroyo pour doubles et de Mex. Folk." 'saw Vanegas Arroyo for doubles [of prints] and about *Mexican Folkways*' (October 7, 1925); perhaps "V Arroyo et Mexam" 'Vanegas Arroyo and Mexam' (January 14, 1925). Charlot also arranged—probably for the artist and printmaking teacher Carlos Orozco Romero—the creation of an engraving at the Vanegas Arroyo workshop (November 22, 1925). Some help was probably offered to Guerrero and Siqueiros as well (December 11, 1926).

On the evidence, Charlot seems responsible for the collaboration of Vanegas Arroyo in the publication of Posada images in *Mexican Folkways* and probably for the occasional mentions of that artist.²³⁰ He was, however, shocked and angry to find his preparatory work on the catalogue being used in a publication he considered a loose grab-bag of materials in the Vanegas Arroyo workshop.²³¹ Charlot wrote to Brenner several times on the subject (chronological order not established):

Please take care of my things F.W. Es decir yo no quiero que emplean my stuff G.
Posadas, ni el cliché ni retrato ni lo impreso ni lo que yo habia escogido para

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imprimir. Esta apartado en casa V.A. Lo mas feo es que esto me hace quedar mal con Vanegas Arroyo. (JC to AB “Just receive strange card Francis”)

‘Please take care of my things F.W. [Folkways] That is to say, I do not want them to use my G. Posadas stuff: the photograph, nor the portrait, nor the print, nor what I had chosen to print. It has been set aside in the V. A. house. The ugliest is that this will make me look bad with Vanegas Arroyo.’

Recibido carta idiota nº2 de Francis. Quiere no sé qué en terminos mitad amables, mitad amenazantes : pero come se olvide de pedir perdon por los insultos de carta idiota nº 1 no le contesto. Por Vanegas Arroyo ya te escribi todo. Una vez mas, que no haga uso Francis ni de mis notas, ni del cliché Posadas, ni de lo hecho por V.A. si hay algo nuevo hecho. es lo que te ruego aunque te cueste dinero. (Bonito francesito, verdad.) (“It seems that we would take only the boat”)

‘I received the idiotic letter Number 2 from Frances. She wants I don’t know what in terms that are half friendly and half threatening. But since she forgets to ask pardon for the insults of idiotic letter Number 1, I don’t answer it. But I have written everything to you for Vanegas Arroyo. Once more, don’t let Frances use my notes, nor the Posadas photograph, nor what has been done for V. A., if something new has been done. I ask you this even though it costs you money. (Nice little French man, right?)’

Question Folkways : Dices que no te he dicho objetivamente de suspender V.A. Pero si te lo he dicho. Y todo lo que se sigue haciendo es en beneficio de Francis porque no puedo pagar todo el trabajo de mi bolsa, y esto me duele el estomago. Desde su carta, que te pido conservar, no quiero tener nada que ver con Francis. You would have written me such a card, I would have done the same with you, and you are not Francis!

Conque arreglate a lo mejor para que el trabajo hecho y el cliché retrato Posadas no vayan a parar con Francis y no hablamos mas del Folkways que es irremediable.

‘The Folkways Question: You say that I didn’t tell you objectively to suspend V. A. But yes I did tell you. And everything that continues to be done is a benefice to Frances, because I cannot pay all the work from my wallet, and it gives me a stomach ache. Since her letter, which I ask you to keep, I don’t want to have anything to do with Frances. You would have written me such a card, I would have done the same with you, and you are not Francis!

So organize yourself as best you can so that the work already done and the portrait photograph of Posadas don’t end up with Frances and we will speak no more of that Folkways, which is irreparable.’

I stop doing the V.A. number. Diego sabia que yo lo hacia y tenia material reunido y el gran misterio es que quieren aprovechar me pobre trabajo. Te suplico y resuplico hacer lo necesario para guardar el cliché Posadas y arreglar con V.A de no darles los

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cliches que yo habia escogido. Diego es muy inteligente pero no tomara tiempo de buscar material ni hechos y que salga en FW un articulo de el diciendo que Posadas es un enorme artista no quita nada de lo que tenemos y esto siempre saldra en otra y mejor parte. (JC to AB “Recibi tu carta estupida Francis”)

‘I stop doing the V.A. number. Diego knew that I was doing it and had material collected, and the great mystery is that they wanted to profit from my poor work. I beg and beg you again to do what’s necessary to guard the Posadas photograph and work out with V. A. not to give them the prints I had selected. Diego is very intelligent, but he will not take the time to search for material, even those already done. And that he puts out in Folkways an article of his saying that Posadas is an enormous artist—that takes nothing away from what we have, and this will always come out in some other and better publication.’

Charlot does not speak badly of O’Higgins’ later involvement in the project:

This is from the little girl of Vanegas Arroyo. I went there with Paul : He is preparing Francis’ edition of the grabados [‘prints’]. (JC → AB “This is from”)

As little as he thought of the book, he felt that it killed the prospects of the necessary support for his own project. He always regretted the lost opportunity to write a catalogue raisonné with the collaboration of Blas Vanegas Arroyo and his family and staff. Charlot used his research in his articles on Posada (e.g., August 25, 1928).

Charlot was also helping other authors, like Anita Brenner, for whom he was also copying Prehispanic and folk art as illustrations for her *Idols Behind Altars*.²³² He helped Alfons Goldschmidt with the text and illustrations of his excellent “Der Maler der Indios in Mexiko: Jean Charlot.”²³³

Besides writing his own articles and helping others with texts and illustrations, Charlot accepted appointment as the first art editor of Frances Toor’s *Mexican Folkways*. Charlot characteristically devoted himself to this position as can be seen in the numerous references to Toor, the journal, and the printing house.²³⁴ He himself provided a poster for the first issue of June–July 1925 and a tipped-in centerfold lithograph, *Dance: Chalma*, for the second of August–September.²³⁵ The poster was used as a basis with varying colors for the first six covers of the magazine, and Charlot created small, uncredited vignettes for distribution throughout the issues.²³⁶ Charlot also wrote an article for *Mexican Folkways*, “Esthetics of Indian dances/Estética de las danzas indígenas.”²³⁷

When Charlot left for the Carnegie Institution work in Chich’en Itza, Rivera assumed his position for Volume 1, Number 5, February–March, 1926.²³⁸ Toor felt she had gained by enlisting “Mexico’s most famous and greatest artist.”²³⁹ Rivera credited Charlot’s vignettes (pp. 3, 8, 14, 18, 20, 28) and continued using his cover for three issues. But Charlot and his artwork were soon dropped from the magazine, with Rivera supplying his own initialed and different vignettes or illustrations (e.g., Volume 2, Number 1: 16, 18, 29). The last use of Charlot’s masthead was in Volume 2, Number 5, 1926). Long articles with many illustrations were subsequently published of Rivera’s own work.

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Charlot also worked with the journal *Forma*, which was directed by the anti-muralists Gabriel Fernández Ledesma and Salvador Novo, another example of Charlot's crossing partisan lines.²⁴⁰ The first issue was published in October 1926, but work on the journal had started earlier (Diary February 12, 1924; December 3, 1925). Charlot supported *Forma* with two articles in the first issue: "Pinturas Murales Mexicanas" and "Para las Gentes de Buena Voluntad" (October 1926). He published another three in the second: "Asimilando" (unsigned), "Manuel Manilla, Grabador Mexicano," and "David Alfaro Siqueiros: Un Verdadero Rebelde en Arte," published under Anita Brenner's name (November/December 1926). Charlot published one article in the fourth issue—"Ilustraciones jeroglíficas" (unsigned; 1927)—another in the fifth—"Nota sobre la Pintura Mural de los Mayas" (January 1928; with a four-page section of his woodcuts)—and a final article in the sixth—"José Clemente Orozco: Su Obra Monumental" (June 1928). A major article on Posada was announced on the inside back cover of Volume 2, Number 7, 1928, for Number 8—"José Guadalupe Posada, grabador mexicano"—but that issue never appeared. "Modelado" (1927) may have been intended for *Forma* as well.

Two of Charlot's articles for *Forma* seem to have been lost. One was on the fresco in the Temple of the Tigers at Chich'en Itza: "commencé copie aquarelle fresque Tigres pour Forma" 'started watercolor copy of Tigers fresco for *Forma*' (Diary September 6, 1927); "copie fresque pour article" 'copy fresco for article' (September 9, 19, 1927); "complété fresque Tigres" 'completed Tigers fresco' (November 28, 1927); "écrit article sur fresque maya" 'wrote article on Maya fresco' (December 7, 1927); "copie totale de la fresque au petit" 'total copy of fresco at small scale' (December 13, 1927); "vu Ledesma : lui donné mon article sur fresque tigre" 'saw Ledesma: gave him my article on tiger fresco' (August 3, 1928). Charlot did write on the subject later, but no Spanish-language version has survived (AA II 4657). Ledesma also had a school of sculpture for which he wanted publicity: "Ledesma me demande un article sur son école" 'Ledesma asks me for an article on his school.'²⁴¹ Charlot started on the article that evening and finished it the next day, but it was never published and no typescript has been located.

Charlot had only one major disagreement with Ledesma and Novo:

on va nommer Salvador Novo censeur de la revue. on a mutilé mon article. je ne donne plus rien dans ces conditions. (Diary October 27, 1926)
 'Salvador Novo is going to be named censor of the review. they have mutilated my article. I will give them nothing more under these conditions.'

The mutilated article seems to have been "Asimilando" (November–December 1926), which was reprinted in an expanded—probably the original—form as "Ilustraciones jeroglíficas" (1927). For two years, *Forma* offered Charlot a Mexican outlet for his longer, more technical essays. The journal ceased publication as Charlot was preparing to move to the United States, where much of his writing would be done in English.

Despite the amount of surviving material, much remains to be discovered. For instance, Charlot wrote to Dr. Richard D. Woods on June 14, 1975, about Brenner:

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In the early 1920s she published a small periodical to which both Clemente Orozco and myself furnished drawings, but that too would be hard to find. I even forgot its name.

- ¹ Charlot continued to report unusual dreams, e.g., Diary December 21, 1926 (“matin : juste avant réveil crise d’attention charnelle avec présence de caractère plus réel que dans rêves ordinaires” ‘morning: just before waking, crisis of bodily attention with presence more real in character than in ordinary dreams’).
- ² Charlot August 16, 1967. In an interview, Don Cambern, the editor of *Easy Rider* (1969), stated that he tried to edit the film on marijuana, since everyone else was smoking, but found that everything he edited while high had to be redone.
- ³ Brenner-Charlot 1928: 65 f. The group, apparently led by Weston, also threw a surprise party with everyone in KKK costumes (Diary 1924: March 4, 8). Charlot had seen D. W. Griffith’s *Birth of a Nation* on October 6, 1923, and found it “magnifique” ‘magnificent.’
- ⁴ *MMR* 305 ff. Diary 1923: February 26, 27. Appendini 1972: 3, after their destructive high-jinks, the artists were told by Governor Zuno to leave town because they were in danger of being lynched. Also *MMR* 249 ff.
- ⁵ See also 1923: May 26, August 5; October 31, 1925; 1927: September 5, 22.
- ⁶ Writings Related to *MMR*: Passages Cut. Diary 1923: August 16, 20.
- ⁷ Diary July 20, 1923 (“aidé Amado qui commence” ‘helped Amado, who is beginning’); 1924: August 5, September 9 (“Archivos de la Nación. puis papeles et notes. copie document pour Amado” ‘National Archives. then papers and notes. copy document for Amado’), 22; May 21, 1925.
- ⁸ *MMR* 154 f., 282. On the Damas Católicas, Facius 1958: 20 ff. Fell 1989: 428431.
- ⁹ *MMR* 266 f., 287 ff., 299. Diary 1923: June 20 (“a commencé dans l’Heraldo. campagne contre Diego” ‘in the *Heraldo*, a campaign has started against Diego’), June 22 (“on imprime feuille pour répondre attaque Diego” ‘We publish a handbill to answer the attack on Diego’ [*MMR* 266]). Zuñiga 2008: 20 f.
- ¹⁰ Edwards 1966: 172. Fell 1989: 427 f.
- ¹¹ Diary October 22, 1923. Fell 1989: 346 f.
- ¹² Diary 1924: February 7, 16, September 25 (“j’étais pour paye mais on refuse” ‘I went for my pay but was refused’), 26 (“couru pour paye” ‘ran around for pay’), 27 (“couru pour paye” ‘ran around for pay’), 29 (“allé au dep. éditorial on me paye la atrasada. 290 env” ‘went to editorial department got paid the back pay, around 290’), 30 (“allé au dep. éditorial on me paye 140” ‘went to editorial department got paid 140’), November 3 (“me faire payer” ‘make them pay me’), December 24 (“on paye las atrasadas” ‘they pay my back pay’). The last relevant entry is for October 5, 1929 (“on me paie à l’université” ‘I get paid at the university’).

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- ¹³ *MMR* 152, 160 f. *Tabletalk* September 1971. Charlot had a negative impression of Lawrence both as a man and a thinker: ‘lu Feathered Serpent D. H. Lawrence idiot’ ‘read *Feathered Serpent* D. H. Lawrence idiotic’ (Diary May 8, 1926). The Chich’en Itza staff gave Charlot a copy of the book on his next birthday (Diary February 8, 1927)! Charlot notes meeting Porter at a party (Diary September 5, 1923).
- ¹⁴ Diary October 8, 1928. The correct title is probably *La Peinture Moderne*.
- ¹⁵ E.g., List Arzubide: 62–66. Weston 1961: 63. Andrews 2011: 8.
- ¹⁶ Weston 1961: 101, 104. Andrews 2011: 16 f.
- ¹⁷ Diary 1924: October 23, 29 (“placement de l’exposition [pour demain !]”) ‘placing of exhibition [for tomorrow!]’, 30 (same; also “exposition mais dans impossible place” ‘exhibition but in impossible place’), 31 (“commencer à mettre exposition fini mettre exposition” ‘started to set up exhibition finished setting up exhibition’); November 1 (“inauguration exposition 11 h Obregon etc.” ‘inauguration of exhibition 11:00 AM Obregón, etc.’). Charlot visited the exhibition with his mother on November 6 and 8.
- ¹⁸ Diary November 20, 1924. “Gravures sur bois : 1^{er} prix” ‘Woodcuts: First Prize’ (Charlot April 1931).
- ¹⁹ *El Universal* April 28, 1925, Clipping 19. JC to AB “Cuando yo estaba en Amecameca”; 27425.
- ²⁰ Diary 1925: April 21; also April 22, 23, 24, 25; May 1 [?], 7, 28; June 13. “Aquarelles Amecameca. Via Crucis” ‘Amecameca watercolors. Way of the Cross’ (Charlot April 1931).
- ²¹ Associated Press 1925. JC to AB 29325; 8525; “Recibi carta tuya. Adress Edward.” The JCC holds a letter from the organizing committee addressed to “Miss Jean Charlot.”
- ²² Weston 1961: 139. Mexicans were happy about Rivera winning the prize (Glusker 2010: 13). Charlot was in a bad mood about the exhibition (Weston 1961: 141).
- ²³ A similar description is provided in “Our Contributors” 1925:
- Esperanza Velázquez Bringas, Head of the Department of Libraries of the Secretariat of Public Instruction, appointed by President Calles, is the first Mexican woman to hold a public position of such high importance. She is a lawyer, author and lecturer, and for two years traveled as “misionera” among the Indians.
- ²⁴ Two undated letters from Pintao to Charlot. Harold Leonard to Charlot September 5, 1943. Pablo O’Higgins to Charlot December 7, 1943. All this correspondence is in the JCC.
- ²⁵ Glusker 1998: 46; 2010: 18 (“Better to keep him out of Diego’s range of vision, for Goitia is a big, a great master and Diego might—!—make trouble for him”); 252 (Rivera’s “fear of Orozco [& Goitia]”). Orozco could also be jealous of Goitia (González Mello 1995: 87).

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- ²⁶ JC to AB May 3, 1925. Charlot mentions visits with Brenner to Goitia, e.g., 1925: October 25, December 26. See also González Mello 1995: 60; 62, “no olvidemos que los unía un catolicismo místico exacerbado” ‘let us not forget that they were united by an exacerbated, mystical Catholicism’ (I do not know his sources). *MMR* 77 f., Charlot’s description of Goitia’s religiosity does not resemble his own, and Goitia’s hermetic life-style is presented as the antithesis of the sociability of the muralists.
- ²⁷ Charlot’s letters to Brenner have not been organized chronologically and are sometimes difficult to understand because her side of the correspondence is missing. Visit: “Yo se muy bien que no puedes escribir mucho”: he went to see Goitia who is suffering and changing his art; “Recibi carta tuya. Adress Edward”: visited Goitia with Henrietta Shore. Sending news to Brenner: “Recibi carta tuya. Adress Edward”: “De Goytia nada” ‘Nothing of Goitia’; “Que mal escribes y que pena me das!”: Goitia made a portrait of a woman who died of fear; he liked a painting by Clausel; “Estoy requetequetraste”; “Gracias por el diario tuyo. *Lo necesitaba.*” Complaint: January 1, 1928. Difficult to understand: “Me da mucha tristeza.” Glusker 2010: 550, Charlot finds a Goitia drawing “muy bello, aunque no lo parece” ‘Very beautiful, although it does not appear so.’
- ²⁸ *Idols* 288302. JC to AB “Parece que con el apendice”; “Gracias por el diario tuyo. *Lo necesitaba*”: “La copia que le hizo Goytia es preciosa, quiza mejor que el original” ‘The copy that Goitia made for him is precious, probably better than the original’; May 15, 1925: “I had from Gamio the photo Goytia y te la mando luego. Si es tiempo pon la. es importante tambien para me porque agradara a Gamio and by him I can have (perhaps) a job” ‘I had from Gamio the Goitia photo and I will send it to you soon. If there is time, put it in. It is important also for me because it will please Gamio and by him I can have (perhaps) a job.’
- ²⁹ Charlot records in his diary a “crise de folie” ‘crisis of madness’ of Goitia (November 27, 1926). Charlot reported to Brenner that Goitia had destroyed some of his paintings (“When Orozco said he was going to New-York”).
- ³⁰ Vasconcelos *Memorias* 2: 256 f.; also 119 ff., 231, 298, 308, 315. Haya de la Torre worked later for Alfons Goldschmidt the Instituto de Asuntos Latinoamericanos in Berlin.
- ³¹ Gallo 2005: 112 (“Not only was the Underwood modern, portable, and vertiginously fast, but it was also the machine of choice for revolutionary intellectuals”).
- ³² Purely social or unspecified meetings: Diary 1924: March 2 (the first mention of Goldschmidt), 31, October 24, November 23; 1925: May 12, July 5, 7, 10 (?), November 9 (missed dinner), 10 (missed dinner), 11, December 30 (Mrs. Goldschmidt).
- ³³ Diary June 28, 1924. Lectures: Diary 1924: May 7, 9, 12, 21, 26, 28, June 2, 9, 10 (missed class), 16 (missed class), 25, 30.
- ³⁴ Diary 1924: November 17, 18, 19, 20, 25 (“4 dessins à l’encre de Goldsmith” ‘four ink drawings of Goldschmidt’), December 2; 1925: August 9 (“1 grand Goldsmith” ‘a large Goldschmidt’), 23, November 11.
- ³⁵ Patka 1999: 4853. Baeza Flores 1962: Haya de la Torre worked for Goldschmidt for a time.

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- ³⁶ Glusker 2010: 21. This reference is to Francisco Iturbe. All other references listed in the Index—except perhaps p. 479—seem to be to Felipe Iturbe. Tibol 1996: 88.
- ³⁷ Personal communication, Clemente Orozco V., June 8, 2004. Many expressions of Charlot's admiration for Orozco are recorded: e.g., Diary June 24, 1926, "vu Orozco : magnifique peinture" 'saw Orozco: magnificent painting.'
- ³⁸ Tabletalk early 1970s, "Early man, Rivera, and Orozco." Reed 1956: 207 f. Compare Anreus 2001: 12 ("He was a passionate spirit and yet strangely perceptive and clear-sighted").
- ³⁹ Tabletalk June 24, 1971. Tibol 1996: 95.
- ⁴⁰ Charlot 1958 *Mary and Art*. Tibol 1996: 176, 177 ("Orozco había hecho burla de cualquier lucha política organizada" 'Orozco had made a joke of any organized political fight'); 196, 201, at the end of his life, Orozco painted many Christian subjects.
- ⁴¹ Charlot 1967 José Clemente Orozco. Orozco V. 1983: 430, Rivera agreed, calling Orozco "el León Bloy de la pintura" 'the Leon Bloy of painting.'
- ⁴² Diary 1924: March 12, September 28. The list includes a section of illustrations in *Contemporáneos*: "José Clemente Orozco: Frescos" (January 1929). Charlot mentions writing about Orozco in his diaries: e.g., 1927: October 28, 29, November 3, December 30; 1928: January 12, 13, June 25 ("reçu *Forma* no 6 avec mon article sur Orozco. grand plaisir" 'received *Forma* number 6 with my article on Orozco. great pleasure'), August 15. Charlot also mentions Brenner's writing: Diary May 3, 1929. Besides publicizing Orozco's work through publications, both Charlot and Brenner actively promoted his work to potential buyers, e.g., Diary 1927: November 11, 14, 19, 24, 26, December 7 (?).
- ⁴³ Diary. Social: e.g., 1923: August 6, November 17; June 5, 1924; 1925: October 6, 20, 21; 1926: January 8, 15, August 9, September 17, September 19 (Charlot praises the "mole oaxaqueño noir avec chocolat" 'the Oaxaca style black *mole* with chocolate' prepared by Orozco's mother), October 29, November 16; 1927: July 7, 8, August 1, October 31, November 28, December 3; 1928: September 1, 18, October 15. Viewed: February 6, 1924; October 24, 1925 (Orozco shows Charlot and Brenner "très bonnes choses" 'very good things'); 1926: June 24 ("vu Orozco : magnifique peinture. AM : 5 h Orozco montré mes peintures" 'saw Orozco: magnificent painting. Afternoon 5:00 PM Orozco, showed my paintings'), September 12 ("chez Orozco. ses projets pour Preparatoria" 'to Orozco's. his projects for Preparatoria'), 19 (Charlot and Orozco visit Clausell and admire his paintings), November 3; 1927: July 14 ("Orozco pour voir sa fresque" 'Orozco to see his fresco'), October 10 ("avec Orozco chez lui. vu peintures et dessins pour son expo." 'with Orozco at his place. see paintings and drawings for his exhibition'), 11 ("avec Orozco à école de sculpture. avec Ledesma" 'with Orozco to the sculpture school. with Ledesma'), 19 ("Orozco et exp" 'Orozco and exhibition'), 20 ("chez Orozco voir ses nouveaux tableaux" 'at Orozco's to see his new paintings'), November 14 ("chez lui voir tableau de fleurs. (!)" 'at Orozco's see painting of flowers!'). Model: November 16, 1923. Suppression: September 11, 1923; 1924: June 25, November 29.

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- ⁴⁴ *Mexican Folkways*, Volume 1, Number 3, October/November, 1925: 21, the print; 30 (“Waking the Dead,” “Drawing by J. C. Orozco”). Charlot Diary November 11, 1925 (“reçu lettre furieuse d’Orozco” ‘received furious letter from Orozco’). Charlot 1971: 31 f.; 1974: 18, 25 f. Orozco V. 1983: 152 f. Charlot Tabletalk 1971. González Mello 1995: 65, 67. Glusker 2010: 441 f., in June 1927, Orozco did not object to Brenner’s using the print. *The Wake* was published in Reed 1932. Tibol 1996: 89 f., Orozco later objected to an interpretation in the same journal of his Preparatoria mural of Cortes and Malinche. See also *Mexican Folkways*, Volume 5, Number 1, 1929: 9, Orozco objects to Toor.
- ⁴⁵ See above. Also, e.g., Diary 1927: July 6 (“retour avec Orozco. grand plaisir de le revoir” ‘return with Orozco. great pleasure to see him again’). Charlot involved in publications on Orozco: 1927: October 28, 29, December 30; 1928: January 12, 13, June 25. Charlot helps with Orozco exhibition: 1927: November 3, 5, 15, 16, December 26; 1928: August 12, October 1, 14, 22. Charlot shows and helps sell Orozco artworks: 1927: November 11, 19, 24, December 26.
- ⁴⁶ Glusker 2010: 575; reference in 1998: 263.
- ⁴⁷ Diary 1928: September 10 (“10 h Preparatoria : Tina. dur travail pour photos fresques Clemente [avec Miguel] AM : fatigué et dormi” ‘10 AM Preparatoria: Tina. hard work for photos Clemente frescoes [with Miguel] Afternoon: tired and slept’), 12 (“allé chez Tina : vu photos Clemente : bonnes” ‘went to Tina’s: saw Clemente photos: good’), 29, 30 (“10 h Tina à Preparatoria pour photos Clemente restés là j. 4 h ½ mangé sandwichs. fatigué” ‘10 AM Tina to Preparatoria for Clemente photos stayed there until 4:30 PM ate sandwiches. tired’), October 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 (“10 h : Tina Preparatoria. photos Clemente. travail j. 6 h. déjeuné là” ‘10 AM: Tina Preparatoria. Clemente photographs. work till 6 PM. ate lunch there’), 9, 10, 12, 14 (“9 h ½ Tina à la Secretaria : l’aidé à faire photos Diego. puis Prep. toute la journée photos Orozco. rentré vers 5 h ½. déjeuner sandwich. soir : grande fatigue” ‘9:30 AM Tina to the Ministry of Education: helped her take the Diego photos. then to the Preparatoria. all day Orozco photos. returned home around 5:30 PM. sandwich lunch. evening: very tired’), 15, 16, 17 (?), 18, 19, 21, 22. Orozco 1974: 18 f. (Charlot).
- ⁴⁸ Orozco 1987: 130. E.g., Tibol 1996: 117. Anreus 2001: 34, 84 f., 151 note 42.
- ⁴⁹ 1927: October 10 (“avec Orozco chez lui. vu peintures et dessins pour son expo.” ‘with Orozco at his place. viewed paintings and drawings for his exhibition’), 12, 20 (“chez Orozco voir ses nouveaux tableaux” ‘at Orozco’s to see his new pictures’), November 5 (“avec Orozco. préparer son exp.” ‘with Orozco. prepare his exhibition’), November 14 (“rapporté tableaux Orozco chez lui” ‘brought back Orozco pictures to his place’ [JC note: “They were at our place to be framed”]), 16, December 26 (“chez Orozco. vu sa maman et sa femme. rapporté tableaux pour M^{rs} Paine” ‘at Orozco’s. saw his mother and his wife. brought back pictures for Mrs. [Frances Flynn] Paine’ [the pictures were for the New York show]); 1928: January 2, August 12, September 1, 18, 29, October 1, 2, 15, 16, 21, 22, November 4 (“aidé Orozco à coller photographies” ‘helped Orozco glue photographs’).
- ⁵⁰ Orozco 1974: 20, 31 (Charlot). Tabletalk 1971?.
- ⁵¹ Diary 1928: November 5, 9, 11, 12, 13, 24, December 7, 28, 30, 31; 1929: April 9, 10, 11. Orozco helped Charlot after his mother’s death (Diary 1929: January 17, 18).

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- ⁵² Diary: April 15, 1929 (“cherché tableaux Clemente et arrangé son exp. déjeuné avec lui Alma et Benton inauguration : Art Student League” ‘fetched Clemente paintings and arranged his exhibition. lunch with him, Alma, and Benton. opening: Art Student League’). Orozco 1987: 151. Reed 1956: 107112. Tibol 1996: 119 (“la primera exposición antológica de Orozco” ‘the first anthological exhibition of Orozco’); also 120.
- ⁵³ Glusker 2010: 684. Orozco’s excitement had already begun the previous year, Diary September 29, 1928, “reçu télégramme de Clemente parlant de grands succès. demande nouvelles photos” ‘received telegram from Clemente speaking of great success. asks for new photos.’
- ⁵⁴ Brenner identified the main critic as José Juan Tablada (2010: 574). Charlot’s only relevant allusion is in his Diary of August 26, 1929:
- Alma réunion du Tablada club (!) Maroto Schell etc.... Alma a maintenant une bonne galerie
‘At Alma’s, meeting of the Tablada club(!) Maroto, Schell etc.... Alma now has a good gallery.’
- ⁵⁵ In a manuscript note, “Accomplish. 4-,” “Expositions and Awards” for “Nov. 1930/ca. 1929” “Coming shows –,” Charlot included “12 – 30 Mexican group. Delphic Studios (two oils).” In his Spanish and English editions of Orozco’s letters from New York (1971, 1974), Charlot only hints at the situation, even though Orozco alludes to it at the beginning of his last letter. Charlot provides enough accurate information to satisfy the ordinary reader, but anyone who knows what happened can follow the few indications provided.
- ⁵⁶ Tibol 1996: 123. González Mello 2002a: 55 f. and note 205. Indyck 2003: 334. Zuñiga 2008: 22–25, 38 f., Emilio Amero, who was assisting Orozco, was also excluded from the gallery.
- ⁵⁷ Reed 1956: 131. Charlot 1971: 122, 127. Weston 1966: 177, quotes Reed:
- I had decided to discontinue the work of handling, showing, all other artists except Clemente,—the gallery was really started to ‘put him over,’—because of my belief in his greatness. Now I have seen your work. It complements his—there is no conflict—you are both striving toward the same end.
- ⁵⁸ E.g., Idols 342 f., note 61. Reed 1956: 34, 37 f., 41, 107, 111 f., 165 f. Tibol 1996: 120, 123. Compare Orozco 1987: 121 f. For a modern treatment, Cervantes and Mackenzie 2010: Horrores 24, 29, 52, 105, 454, 560 f., 466 f., 494, 514, 522, 542, 544 ff., 583.
- ⁵⁹ Not successful: Reed 1956: 7680; Tibol 1996: 112. Paris: Reed 1956: 83 f.

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- ⁶⁰ Charlot himself was told negative gossip about Orozco; someone claimed that Orozco was jealous that Charlot had been placed in the *Vanity Fair* Hall of Fame before him (“We nominate for the Hall of Fame” 1930, 1931). Reed 1956: 244.
- ⁶¹ Tabletalk 1970, 1971. Compare Charlot 1971: 122.
- ⁶² Orozco 1987: 189 f.; February 10, 1930. Charlot was surprised at Benton’s hesitation after his earlier agreement, but apparently did not connect it to Orozco: Diary 1929: May 15 (“Benton vu mes tableaux. me donne exhibit au League” ‘Benton saw my pictures. gives me exhibit at league’), November 8 (“vu Benton : il ne peut pas m’assurer de l’exp à l’Art League !” ‘saw Benton: he cannot assure me of a show at the Art League!’), November 19 (“réponse de Benton : Art League fait mon exp. en Janvier” ‘answer of Benton: the Art League will do my exhibition in January’).
- ⁶³ Anreus 2001: 23. Mello 2002a: 56, advises taking Orozco’s complaints “with a grain of salt.”
- ⁶⁴ Orozco 1987: 32 f. See also 33, 44 (“sus amigos Jean Charlot y Justino Fernández”), 56 f.
- ⁶⁵ González Mello 2002a: 58, “his disagreements with nearly all his patrons and agents.” Compare Charlot 1971: 55.
- ⁶⁶ As far as I know, Orozco never organized his criticisms of *Idols Behind Altars*, but he seems to have objected to what he considered its nationalism, emphasis on folk arts, and promotion of Rivera. Reed 1956: 119, reports that Orozco resented Brenner’s positive remarks about Charlot and Goitia. Orozco 1987: 123, 163. Charlot 1971: 47 f., 55, 57, 60, 81. Orozco V. 1983: 196, Orozco called Brenner “Volpone” but continued to accept her help. Tibol 1996: 109 f., Brenner continued to help Orozco after he broke with her. Glusker 1998: 46, “Anita’s protection of artists that Diego would have liked to annihilate, such as Charlot, Orozco, and Goitia.” González Mello 2002a: 41, 300 f., 337. Anreus 2001: 25 f. See also below.
- ⁶⁷ E.g., Orozco 1987: 271, 304. González Mello 2002a: 56, 59; note, 232, Reed continued to represent Orozco. Miliotes 2002: 346, note 27. But see Orozco V. 1983: 390, Orozco regrets other people accusing Reed of dishonesty.
- ⁶⁸ Orozco 1987: 127, 131; also 325 f. (Vasconcelos), 329 ff. (Ines Amor and other dealers).
- ⁶⁹ Orozco 1987: 127; also 124.
- ⁷⁰ Compare Glusker 2010: 635:
- I got a letter from Clemente, begging me to remember that I had said I was not going to write or publish anything more about him. This I got rather a kick out of. It was a genuine, though misplaced, demonstration of strength.
- ⁷¹ Glusker 2010: 649; also 571, 580.
- ⁷² Solyom, email to the board of the Jean Charlot Foundation, April 4, 2015. Reed 1956: 146.
- ⁷³ O’Higgins to Charlot, January 24, 1943. Also April 27, 1943; June 10, 1943.

- ⁷⁴ Orozco 1987: 314317. Anreus 2001: 136.
- ⁷⁵ Diary 1924: January 20, 24, 25; February 5, 6; May 3, 4; June 27; September 9, 13; October 5, 17, 29; November 4, 7, 10, 12, 18, 19, 27.
- ⁷⁶ Diary 1925: January 10; March 24, 25, 31; April 2, 4, 21, 26; May 15, 19, 29; June 1 (?), 9.
- ⁷⁷ Lances and scaffold: Diary January 31, 1923; *MMR* 183; Writings Related to *MMR*: Passages Cut 183 f., 297 f. Finish: 19201925 Ludwigshafen Notebook: “Ses Œuvres de 1923.” Roll call: Writings Related to *MMR*: Passages Cut 183 f., 297 f.
- ⁷⁸ E.g., Leal 1990: 94. Coffey 2002: 33 note 12.
- ⁷⁹ Vs. Fernández 1964: 84, says that Rivera respected the accomplished work of Charlot and Guerrero.
- ⁸⁰ Diary 1923: July 29, August 19, September 12 (on being ordered to paint shields), October 6 (“triste et grande crise de larmes” ‘sad and big crisis of tears’), October 17, October 21 (“tristesse très grande” ‘very big sadness’), December 12 (“très grande tristesse” ‘very big sadness’). Charlot was also sad because of his difficult relationship with Nahui Olin (October 29).
- ⁸¹ Diary 1923: February 18–19, April 30, May 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 12. *MMR* 255.
- ⁸² Diary 1923: September 24, October 3. *MMR* 277.
- ⁸³ Assist: Charlot mentions attending to scaffolds (Diary 1925: January 21, 22, 28, 30, February 5), being paid or not (1923: October 27, 29; 1924: January 31, February 16, March 10, May 21, September 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, December 9, 30), and painting minor sections for Rivera (*MMR* ???). Weston 1961: 103.
- Mentions of work at the Ministry of Education that cannot be tied to Charlot’s known projects refer probably to various types of assistance that he was providing other artists, e.g., March 25, 1924. Social: e.g., Diary 1923: November 20, 28, 30, December 8; 1924: January 12, 19, May 31, June 6, 16, August 2, November 16, 30, December 16, 21, 22, 23; 1925: January 9, 14, February 11, 12, 18, March 2.
- ⁸⁴ Vasconcelos *Memorias* 2: 149157. Fell 1989: 346 f., 428 f. *MMR* 154 f., 280293. Fauchereau 2013: 119, without references identifies the students as Roman Catholics.
- ⁸⁵ Fell 1989: 428 f. Siqueiros 1996: 460.
- ⁸⁶ Leal 1990: 92 ff. Fell 1989: 431. *MMR* 266 ff.
- ⁸⁷ Siqueiros 1977: 190 f., 196. *MMR* 155. Appendini 1972: 3.
- ⁸⁸ Leal 1990: 94 f. Fell 1989: 427431.
- ⁸⁹ Amero 1947. Acevedo 1986: 205.
- ⁹⁰ Leal 1990: 93, recalls being protected by a sympathetic student from his hostile fellows.
- ⁹¹ Fell 1989: 428 f. Siqueiros 1996: 460.
- ⁹² *MMR* index. Siqueiros 1977: 191.
- ⁹³ Conger 1992: 114/1924. Weston 1932: 12; 1961: illustration 17. Glusker 2010: 20.
- ⁹⁴ Krauze 1997: 397 (428, another revolt). Katz 1998: 774.

- ⁹⁵ Goldschmidt 1927: 189. Vasconcelos *Memorias* 2: 8796, 106, 223.
- ⁹⁶ Diary December 15. Rivera claimed that, armed by Xavier Guerrero, he and Siqueiros traveled to Puebla to volunteer but did not see combat (Lilia Roura Fuentes 2012: 286, 306).
- ⁹⁷ Zuñiga 2008: 22 f. Charlot's diary mentions Amero on February 19, 1924.
- ⁹⁸ Charlot writes *peins* 'paint' rather than *finis* 'finish,' but the time taken is right, and he does not mention working on the shield later.
- ⁹⁹ Diary: 1923: October 8, 16; 1924: August 5, September 9. *MMR* 274, 276.
- ¹⁰⁰ Flatness accompanies stiffness in many of the shields, like *Campeche, Chihuahua, Colima, Durango, Morelos, Nayarit, Oaxaca, Queretaro, Quintana Roo, Sinaloa, Sonora, Veracruz, and Yucatán*. Compare the flat stained-glass shield of the National University in San Pedro y Paulo: Enrique Villaseñor, *Escudo universitario* (1922). The vividly colored *Coahuila* may be by Carlos Mérida.
- ¹⁰¹ In an unpublished note, JC wrote: "1rst Mention Ibero-Amer. library = Feb. 14. fini job 25th." He was apparently identifying "écusson espagnol" with "écusson Mexique." Nonetheless, my question mark leaves the point open.
- During the preparation period for these three last shields, Charlot mentions drawing a "tour" 'tower.' This might be a reference to a shield. Unfortunately, towers are numerous: the Escudo de la Ciudad de Mexico, Tabasco, Campeche, Chiapas, Vera Cruz, Tlaxcala, and Yucatan.
- ¹⁰² Charlot could be using French *librairie* 'book store' for Spanish *librería* 'library' of the university.
- ¹⁰³ "Ses Œuvres de 1924" (1920–1925 Ludwigshafen): "2 panneaux longs et arcs (Prep.)" '2 long panels and arches (Preparatoria).' In an unpublished note, Charlot wrote "puis Prep 2 panneaux et ecusson serpent = 29 – April 3" 'the Preparatoria panels and serpent shield = [February] 29 – April 3.'
- ¹⁰⁴ E.g., Schmeckebier 1939: 46, "Charlot's best murals." Myers 1956: 30, "Charlot had completed three panels, among the best he ever produced." Fauchereau 2013: 123, "remarquables par leur impeccable jeu de lignes sans raideur" 'remarkable for their impeccable play of lines without stiffness.' See also Edwards 1996: 177. Flores 2013: 121.
- ¹⁰⁵ *AA* II: 9.4, Section 2.4.2.
- ¹⁰⁶ In conversation, Charlot credited Rivera with initiating the subject in his tropical workers in the stairway of the Ministry (Tabletalk October 21, 1971), but Rivera's chronology places the stairway murals a year later.
- ¹⁰⁷ Flores 2013: 121. Prampolini 2012, Volume 2: 122 [Diana Briuolo Destéfano]. Zantwijk 1960: 30, gender division of labor was prominent in Milpa Alta.
- ¹⁰⁸ A similar gender difference under foreign pressure can be found in Hawai'i.
- ¹⁰⁹ Chapter 3, Section 1.2.1.2. Daumier depicted burden bearers, for instance, in the watercolor *Clown Playing a Drum*.
- ¹¹⁰ Compare Prampolini 2012, Volume 2: 122 [Diana Briuolo Destéfano]: 110.

- ¹¹¹ Prampolini 2012, Volume 2: 122 [Diana Briuolo Destéfano]; and Flores 2013: 121, find this section particularly modernist.
- ¹¹² I thank Lew Andrews for this point.
- ¹¹³ O'Higgins March 21, 1974. Mérida January 29, 1971, interpreted the event benevolently.
- ¹¹⁴ Schmeckebeier 1939: 123. Prampolini 2012, Volume 2: 74 [Diana Briuolo Destéfano].
- ¹¹⁵ When I wrote my 1991, 2001 First Fresco, I did not have the correct dates for the panels, so the ensemble cannot be claimed as the first cycle of the mural movement.
- ¹¹⁶ Charlot October 1945. See also Conger 1992: 308/1926, 334/1926.
- ¹¹⁷ Guadarrama Peña n.d.: 2; also 3. Siqueiros 1977: 196 f. Lilia Roura Fuentes 2012: 263 ff.
- ¹¹⁸ Adhémar 1971: 20 f., 25 f. *MMR* 246.
- ¹¹⁹ Díaz de León 1938: 13. Stewart 1951: 78. Vidal de Alba 1990: unnumbered, "Junto con Emilio Amero intenta resurgir la litografía artística en México" [Charlot] 'Together with Emilio Amero intended to revive artistic lithography in Mexico.' Green 1992: 66. Zurián 2002: 43 (she is mistaken in saying lithography was used in *Urbe*). Rosales 1999b: 129 f. Zuñiga 2008: 56 f. Emilio Amero web site: emilioamero.com/chrono.html.
- ¹²⁰ Amero 1947. Zuñiga 2008: 24 f. (Amero's text).
- ¹²¹ M48, Charlot recalled that the printer had only one lithographic stone, so he and Amero were working on opposite sides of the same stone. The stone was large since Charlot later drew M48–55 on one stone. In the Morse quotation, Charlot mistakenly names Carlos Mérida instead of Amero.
- ¹²² Schneider 1970: 81. See also Flores 2013: 207.
- ¹²³ M48–55; 48, Charlot met with Gutiérrez Cruz on December 10, 1923, to show him the lithographs and discuss the text.
- ¹²⁴ Schneider 1970: 84. Flores 2013: 143.
- ¹²⁵ E.g., Rashkin 2009. Montgomery 2010. Flores 2013. Fauchereau 2013: 61–80.
- ¹²⁶ E.g., *El Ultraismo y las artes plásticas* 1996: 349 f.; 126129, related Mexican artwork. In contrast to Charlot, Siqueiros considered the Contemporáneos the alien camp (1977: 200 f.).
- ¹²⁷ Interview June 12, 1971. Torres Bodet 1961: 284, 291, 330, mentions the government jobs of the Contemporáneos. Rolland 1990: index.
- ¹²⁸ Interview June 12, 1971. Flores 2013: 285 f. and n. 78.
- ¹²⁹ n.d. Poèmes Choisis par Jean Charlot. Montellano 1931.
- ¹³⁰ Villaurrutia 1926. Ledesma 1924. Project: M109. Villaurrutia also praised muralism.
- ¹³¹ Baciú 1968: 69. In *MMR*, Charlot translates *Estridentista* as *Futurist*.
- ¹³² Compare Fell 1989: 543, Maples Arce had the same style problem as the muralists. Rashkin 2009: 55 f. Montgomery 2010: 62, argues that Maples Arce juxtaposed Charlot and Weston's work to make a point.

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- ¹³³ Interview June 12, 1971. Baciú 1968: 70. Diary March 18, 1924 (“avec Arce Revueltas” ‘with Arce and Revueltas’).
- ¹³⁴ Siqueiros 1977: 179, argues that the Estridentistas had a clearer theoretical view of modernism than the artists.
- ¹³⁵ Schneider 1970: 41. Fauchereau 2013: 70. Compare Zurián 2002: 40.
- ¹³⁶ The Estridentista/heterosexual and Contemporáneos/homosexual divide may also have been a factor in some cases.
- ¹³⁷ Flores 2013: 131. Fauchereau 2013: 78.
- ¹³⁸ Rashkin 2009: 69; 72 (“the close alignment between poet and painter in the struggle for cultural renovation”); 91.
- ¹³⁹ Baciú 1982: 2. Fauchereau 2013: 68 f.
- ¹⁴⁰ List Arzubide May 11, 1981: 73, mentions woodcuts as one of Charlot’s contributions. Vidal de Alba 1990.
- ¹⁴¹ List Arzubide May 11, 1981: 73. On Charlot and his work, see List Arzubide 1927: 19, 39, 42, 50, 52, 62 f.
- ¹⁴² List Arzubide 1927: 62 ff. Schneider 1970: 73, 86. Acevedo 1986: 206. Rashkin 2009: 98-101. Flores 2013: 197–201.
- ¹⁴³ Baciú 1968: 70. Rashkin 2009: 55 f.
- ¹⁴⁴ Charlot mentioned Rimbaud several times to me in conversation. On Apollinaire, Baciú 1968: 68. Rashkin 2009: 4. Reyes Palma 1991: 43. Also List Arzubide 1927: 41, Apollinaire mentioned with Max Jacob, another favorite of Charlot’s.
- ¹⁴⁵ Baciú 1968: 70. Fauchereau 2013: 63 f.
- ¹⁴⁶ Rashkin 2009: 4. Flores 2013: 3134.
- ¹⁴⁷ Schneider 1970: 59, 96. Fell 1989: 541. Leal 1990: 43, quotes Laforgue. Rashkin 2009: 37. Fauchereau 2013: 72.
- ¹⁴⁸ Fauchereau 2013: 67. Compare Rashkin 2009: 4.
- ¹⁴⁹ Maples Arce 1982; 1954, the newspaper article.
- ¹⁵⁰ At the opening of my father’s 1994 retrospective in Mexico, List Arzubide told my brother Martin that our father was his “best friend.” On my visit, see also List Arzubide April 12, 1994.
- ¹⁵¹ Vidal de Alba, 1990. Monahan 1981: 124, 126. Rosales 1999b: 127. Zurián 2002: 43, the earliest Estridentista works were illustrated by Vargas and A. Galvez, 46–52. Rashkin 2009: 78 f. Flores 2013: 177–189, 215, the pioneering treatment. Fauchereau 2013: 80; 64, Tablada had earlier collaborated with artists. The reader should consult the above works, especially Rashkin and Flores, for alternative interpretations.

- ¹⁵² Interview November 25, 1970. John Charlot 1990:1991.
- ¹⁵³ Interview June 12, 1971. Rashkin 2009: 79, disagrees with this view of Charlot's in the interview. More evidence is needed to decide the issue.
- ¹⁵⁴ Interview June 12, 1972. Also M40.
- ¹⁵⁵ Compare Rovira 1955: 158, on Futurist subjects in *URBE*.
- ¹⁵⁶ Volume 1, Chapter 8, Section 3.1.1. The placement of the mouth and cover of the *pneumatique* in *Mental Portrait* corresponds to that of the bullet in *Bullet*.
- ¹⁵⁷ Rashkin 2009: 122. Compare Fauchereau 2013: 80.
- ¹⁵⁸ Compare the interpretations of Flores 2013: 189 f., and Rashkin:
- The woodcut cover of *Esquina* centers on its subjects—simple white silhouettes with flailing limbs—in a vertiginous landscape of colliding right angles, suggesting the constant motion of the modern metropolis. (2009: 79)
- ¹⁵⁹ In Umberto Boccioni's 1911 oil *The Street Enters the House*, the comparatively realistic foreground figure does not perform this function, reducing the background buildings to pure stylization.
- ¹⁶⁰ Adhémar 1971: 22, 24. On the poem, Schneider 1970: 97–191.
- ¹⁶¹ Vázquez 2000: 5. *El Ultraismo y las artes plásticas* 1996: 174.
- ¹⁶² Charlot 1924–1925. Rashkin 2009: 79 (“visual images enhanced the text without being subordinate to it”).
- ¹⁶³ E.g., Rovira 1955: 153–158, emphasizes farewells and their basis in the text. Montgomery 2010: 52, 58 f., 62 ff. (note that Charlot's *Viaduct* is earlier than Weston's photograph of a similar subject). Rashkin 2009: 119–123. Flores 2013: 184–189. All three should be consulted for alternative interpretations of the illustrations.
- ¹⁶⁴ Compare Leal's 1929 *Metropolis* (Flores 2013: 190).
- ¹⁶⁵ Professor Lew Andrews sees an allusion to photographers who used balloons, like Nader and Stieglitz.
- ¹⁶⁶ Flores 2013: 186, a “steel bird/[that] has set its course for a star.” Rovira 1955: 156.
- ¹⁶⁷ Charlot April 1919. Compare Rovira 1955: 158.
- ¹⁶⁸ M61. For a short skirt being connected to a modern way of dressing, see the street sketch DS 033. Rovira 1955: 151, 156, Maples Arce had a goodbye scene at a train station in his first book.
- ¹⁶⁹ Rashkin 2009: 79. M56.
- ¹⁷⁰ Jean Émile Laboureur (1877–1943).
- ¹⁷¹ Schneider 1970: 86; also 181.
- ¹⁷² JC to AB “Me da mucha tristeza.” Jensen 1990 *Nude*.

- ¹⁷³ Volume 1, Chapter 8, Section 1.2. John Charlot 1983.
- ¹⁷⁴ Gamio: Zavala 2001: 135; also 78 ff. Leal: *MMR* 168. Compare Siqueiros 1977: 102 f., he disagrees with Charlot on the Indian bodily form. Orozco stated that he was nauseated by the body (Glusker 2010: 633 f.).
- ¹⁷⁵ There may be unidentified, possible exceptions, e.g., Ramírez 1991: 29. Photographs of nude Indian females were made for purely ethnographic purposes, for instance by Carl Lumholz in the 1890s. Compare Antonio Rodríguez 2000: 90; 94. Pornographic photographs were made in bordellos.
- ¹⁷⁶ The next related entry is March 19: “Luz nue” ‘Luz nude.’ An earlier entry of January 25, 1924, is not clearly a nude: “Luciana de modèle à 3 h.” ‘Luciana as model at 3:00.’
- ¹⁷⁷ A number have been posted on the site of the Jean Charlot Foundation: jeancharlot.org. See also Glusker 2010: 291 (line drawing nude), 308 (line drawing clothed), 484, 574 (much modeling), 577 (shaded clothed), 574 (shaded nude); watercolors, 542, 550. Charlot was following the practice describe above: doing many quick sketches and then choosing the ones he wanted to use for more formal, finished drawings.
- ¹⁷⁸ Weston 1961: 109. Conger 1992: 528/1926, Weston’s photograph of a line drawing of Luz. See also 527/1926—530/1926.
- ¹⁷⁹ M69. The diary entries should be November 1925. I myself know no earlier depictions of this subject. Charlot was clearly trusted in the world of women.
- ¹⁸⁰ Conger 1992: 435/1926. Antonio Rodríguez 2000: 90.
- ¹⁸¹ E.g., Diary September 1, 1924 (“1 dessin de Luz modelée” ‘one drawing of Luz modeled’). Glusker 2010: 246, 547.
- ¹⁸² Volume 1, Chapter 8, Section 3.2. Chapter 3, Section 2.2, above.
- ¹⁸³ E.g., DS-037, 039, 044, 076, 101, 109, 122, 128, 131; US 016.
- ¹⁸⁴ E.g., Oles and Ramírez 2005: 134 [Adriana Zavala]; compare 366 [Dafne Cruz Porchini].
- ¹⁸⁵ Morales 2000: 91. The body seems based on *Great Nude, Chalma*, but the neck and head resemble the style of Modigliani. The model for the neck and head may appear clothed on p. 90. Rivera told Weston a story of Picasso predating a 1908 etching to 1905 (1961: 31).
- ¹⁸⁶ Diary: November 27, 1925. E.g., Glusker 2010: 542, 550.
- ¹⁸⁷ *Street Vendor with Cloths in Mexico City*, aquarelle, signed, October 1923, 11 ¾ high by 8 ¾ wide, 30 cm X 22 ½ cm.
- ¹⁸⁸ *Man with Long Head Sitting in front of Big Bundle, jungle setting, two huts*, aquarelle, undated, 12 X 9”, 30 ½ X 23 cm.
- ¹⁸⁹ *Cargador with Big Cloth Bundle*, aquarelle, signed, January 24, 1924, 12 X 9”, 30 ½ X 23 cm. *Seated Mother in Profile with Child* may be the work referred to in Diary October 14, 1923: “aquarelle : femme et enfant” ‘watercolor: woman and child.’

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- ¹⁹⁰ *Two Newsboys on Mexico City Street*, aquarelle, October 13, 1923, 9 ½" X 9", 24 X 22 ½ cm. *Three Street Boys Playing on Mexico City Street*, aquarelle, November 23, 1923, mat opening: 9 1/8 X 8 ¾", 23 X 22 cm. The last digit of the former date is torn away, but the year can be determined from the diary entry of the same date. The latter date is also based on the relevant diary entry. The diary entries for both October 13 and November 23, 1923, clearly have an *-s* at the end of *papeleros*, but this designates the figures of each painting, I believe, rather than the two paintings themselves.
- ¹⁹¹ The pulling boys feet are depicted as if they were on the same plane. Charlot has borrowed this Precolumbian device to produce another two-dimensional element into the picture.
- ¹⁹² CL 68 *Dowager and Newsboys* (November 1924); CL 137 *Newsboys* (September 1926); CL 571 *Newsboys Asleep* (August 1938).
- ¹⁹³ Charlot calls it the "Cultura Institut" or "Cultura Institution" (Diary 1923: December 7, 10; January 22, 1924). His references to "Mexam." seem to refer to the same institution.
- ¹⁹⁴ Diary 1923: October 25, 31 ("jarabe 11 h ½. j 1 h" 'jarabe 11:30 am to 1 pm'), November 5 ("Jarabe à 11 h. ½" 'Jarabe at 11:30 am), 7 (same note), 19 ("11 h ½ jarabe : china poblana"), 24 (11-½ jarabe), 26 (11-½ jarabe?), 27 (same time), 29 ("11 h ½ jarabe"; "4 h jarabe"), December 5, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17, 28.
- ¹⁹⁵ Regular: 1924: January 21, 22, 23, 24, 28, February 1 (?), 15, March 3, 10, 11, 12, 14, 26 (?), 29, 31. Work and probable work: 1924: January 25 ("matin : aquarelle au C E." 'morning: watercolor at C. E. '), February 1, 4, 6, 7 ("matin : touché mes 50\$ pour frais C. E." 'morning: withdrew my 50\$ for C. E. expenses'), 12 ("C. E. à 12 h *encre de Chine*" 'C. E. at noon India ink'), 13 ("initiales C. E. encre de Chine" 'initials C. E. India ink'), 15, 18, 19, March 4, 13, 24, 26, 27, 29 ("C. E j. 1 h ½" 'C. E. until 1:30'), April 2 ("C. E. fini personas" 'C. E. finished persons'), 3 ("C. E : commence bien" 'C. E.: good start'), 4 ("2 dessins pour C. E." 'two drawings for C. E. '), 6, 10, 11 ("terminé C. E" 'finished C.E. '), 24.
- ¹⁹⁶ 1) *Charro*, one hand on hip, the other in a dance gesture, as if leading a woman forwards, 19-1/2 X 13-3/4. 2) *Charro*, the same or a similar costume, hands behind back, right foot forward and on heel, 19-1/2 X 13-3/4. 3) woman in fancy dance costume, 17-1/2 X 13-3/4. 4) woman in different, tunic-like dance costume (China Poblana?), 19-1/2 X 13-3/4.
- ¹⁹⁷ Diary October 22, 1924. Also 1925: January 13 ("portrait Mexam." 'portrait Mexam. '), 14, May 13.
- ¹⁹⁸ Mérida Interview 1971. F. 1945.
- ¹⁹⁹ Charlot gives the reason for the lack of oils in April 1924: CL 1924, "April. Mural work Preparatoria (No. 14, 15)."
- ²⁰⁰ CL 71. Diary entries record visits and artwork at Amecameca: October 26, 1924; 1925: February 16, April 17, May 8, 9.
- ²⁰¹ On the occasion, the Primer Congreso Eucarístico Nacional, see Facius 1958: 296303. Bailey 1974: 35 f. Sicilia 2007: 545 ff.
- ²⁰² M90, 138. Glusker 2919: 215.

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²⁰³ *Idols* 308. Brenner-Charlot 1928: 63. Siqueiros 1996: 42. Charlot Diary entry for November 6, 1924: “commencé dame” ‘started dame’; November 11, 1924: “finit dame” ‘finished dame.’

²⁰⁴ Compare Orozco’s *El Gólgota* of 1942 (Cervantes and Mackenzie 2010: 334).

²⁰⁵ Weston 1961: 109, chose this painting as a gift when Charlot offered him a choice.

²⁰⁶ The name of the village is written on the frame in a photograph.

²⁰⁷ On a photograph of the painting, alternative titles are written: *El Paso de Sta Anita* and *Les caneaux de Sta Anita*.

²⁰⁸ Rivera, e.g., Magaloni and Govan 2016: 111 (*Still Life with Gray Bowl*, 1915) and unpublished *Cubist Composition (Still Life with Bottle of Anis and Inkwell)*, 1915.

²⁰⁹ Clear and possible early diary references to large paintings:

1924: December 26, 27, 28, 29.

1925: February 13, 18, 19, May 20, 21, 28, 30, 31, June 1, 11, 14, 25, 28, August 11,

12, 22, 25, 26, September 9, 12.

Other possible diary references to large paintings are found on, e.g., 1925: May 20, December 19. Charlot uses “grand” ‘big’ for drawings as well as painting, e.g., 1925: August 9, October 7.

²¹⁰ Diary 1922: January 16, March 30, 31, April 3, 4, May 18; 1924: August 27, October 5, 8, 9; also April 2, 1925.

²¹¹ Diary January 16, 1922; 1924: August 27, October 8, 9; May 9, 1925.

²¹² E.g., Diary 1925: April 27, March 19; October 21, 1926 (“travaille illustrations livre” ‘work on book illustrations’); August 12, 1927 (“Anita : livre” ‘Anita: book’).

²¹³ JC to AB “I am very desirous myself.” The reference is to Amelia Martínez Del Rio’s *The Sun, the Moon, and a Rabbit* (1935).

²¹⁴ JC to AB “I shall be in New York the tenth of April, latest date, and probably earlier,” Charlot asks why the book is delayed. Size, etc.: e.g., 1925: February 2, 12, March 29; “Como que nunca escribes,” “Perhaps I am not going to Guatemala,” “Received your letter where you speak of the sketches.”

²¹⁵ On the writings themselves, e.g., John Charlot 2001 *Présente Édition*; Morse and John Charlot 1995. My Chapter 1 focuses more on content than I do in this section. Charlot’s religious writings are discussed in Chapter 5.

²¹⁶ 1920–1924 Civil: *Seigneur, prenez pitié de ma chair sans contrôle* (February 4, 1922); *Mon Dieu, me voici mué, semblable* (February 6, 1922); *Second mystère: Flagellation* (early 1922); *Soi: Face, à laquelle nul n’a souri sans tristesse* (September 1922). Note the frequent use of *enfant* ‘child’ even in the good poems of this period.

²¹⁷ All poems in this section are from 1920–1924 Civil.

²¹⁸ Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz 1989: 134. 1920–1922 Civil.

- ²¹⁹ n.d. Poèmes Choisis par Jean Charlot. Montellano 1931.
- ²²⁰ E.g., *Matière: Ayez pitié, Seigneur de cette chair sans but* (January 9, 1922), *Seigneur prenez pitié de cette chair grossière* (January 10, 1922), *Dieu, ça me ferait certainement plaisir, mais* (January 23, 1922), *Pourquoi faut-il, Seigneur, que vous glissiez la vitre* (September 20, 1923).
- ²²¹ Georges Courteline (1858-1929), comic novelist and playwright.
- ²²² *J'ai dit* : “*Je veux vivre pieux et tâcheron* (February 9, 1922). Another example of the theme is *Qu'est ce que je vais devenir* (February 2, 1922).
- ²²³ Charlot March 1923. See the bibliographical note in *TF*.
- ²²⁴ Diary March 3, 1925. Clippings 14b, 14c.
- ²²⁵ See my discussion in Chapter 1. E.g., Acevedo 1986: 195–198. Fell 1989: 399 f., 421 f. González Mello 1995: 33–39. Also Argentero 2003: 52. The laudatory Nielsen 1923 is probably a planted article.
- ²²⁶ Diary April 13, 1923? Molina 1923. See my discussion of Molina's article in my 2001 First Fresco.
- ²²⁷ Diary January 27, 1925, Charlot's portrait drawing of Siqueiros was purchased at an exhibition of *Machete* art. However, the article seems to have been written originally for *Revista des Revistas*: “fais article sur Alfaro pour Revista des Revistas” ‘do article on Alfaro for *Revista des Revistas*’ (Diary February 17, 1924). On February 18, 1924, drew Siqueiros' portrait, in all likelihood, the one meant to illustrate the article (Diary).
- ²²⁸ JC to AB “Excuse the paper.” Charlot helped Brenner with her writing on Posada and was happy about her work: August 29, 1927 (“tiré épreuve Posada pour Anita” ‘pulled Posada proof for Anita’); July 27, 1928 (“reçu The Arts avec article Anita sur Posada : très bien” ‘received *The Arts* with Anita's article on Posada: very good’). Glusker 1998: 264. Brenner was aiding Charlot on his projected catalogue raisonné.
- ²²⁹ Diary October 27, 1925. See also 1925: January 10, 13, 14, February 12, 28, March 14, June 19 (“coupé gravure[s] V. Arroyo” ‘trimmed engravings V. Arroyo’), October 15, 17 (“matin : collé gravures V. A.” ‘morning: glued engravings [to paper sheets] V. A.’), 18 (“AM : collé V. A” ‘morning: glued V. A.’), 30, December 1, 2, 18; 1926: November 2 (“9 h : chez V. Arroyo. choisit gravures pour livre” ‘9:00 AM: to V. Arroyo's. chose engravings for book’), December 3 (“écrit livre Posada” ‘wrote Posada book’), 6, 7, 8, 10 (pulling proofs of engravings and cutting margins), 11 (“fini tirage gravures V. A” ‘finished pulling V. A. engravings’); September 4, 1927.
- ²³⁰ *Mexican Folkways*, Volume 1, Number 3, p. 30; Number 4 (a reference to Posada as “J. P.” in an illustration caption); Volume 2, Number 2, pp. 28 f.
- ²³¹ Toor, O'Higgins, and Vanegas Arroyo 1930. Toor 1928: 147 f. Wolfe 1939: 30. Glusker 1998: 71. Charlot Diary 1926: November 4, 5, needs to be deciphered.
- ²³² *Idols*. Charlot's diaries contain many “copie Anita” ‘make copy for Anita.’ An example of his regular work with Brenner was his translation of her article “A Mexican Renaissance” (September 1925; also Brenner-Charlot 1928). Diary 1925: July 27, August 19, 20, October 7, 19).

- ²³³ Goldschmidt January 23, 1927. Diary 1925: September 5, November 9, 11.
- ²³⁴ Diary 1925: February 14, 20, March 5(?), 13, 17, 20, 23 (“15 peintures et 2 grands dessins. pour Frances. travail pour Frances” ‘fifteen paintings and two large drawings. for Frances. work for Frances’), 24, 30, 31, April 13, 21, 23, 27, May 7, 18, 29, June 3, 9, July 2, 29, August 6, 7, 17, 21, 27, September 2, 3, 7, October 7 (collaboration of Vanegas Arroyo with *Mexican Folkways*), 8, 16, 20, 21, 30, November 24, 25, 26, 27, December 23. Printing house: 1925: June 2, August 4, December 7, 9, 10, 11. Charlot’s letters to Brenner complain of Toor’s ignorance, incompetence, and laziness.
- ²³⁵ M67, 68 (Bronwen Solyom has established that the lithograph was included in Number 2, not Number 4). Diary 1925: March 30, April 27. See e.g., Argentero 2003: 93.
- ²³⁶ Volume 1: Number 1: title page, 2, 3, 5, 12, 14, 15, 17, 25, 30; Number 2: title page, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 19, 22, 25, 26, 29, 30; Number 3: title page, 13, 15; Number 4: title page, 6, 8, 13, 14, 16, 18 (p. 3, says by JC), 24–27, 29. Bigger drawings by Charlot: e.g., Volume 1: Number 1: 6. Some of Charlot’s illustrations are labeled “By J.C.” in Volume 1, Number 4, December 1925/January 1926.
- ²³⁷ Charlot August–September 1926. Diary April 1, July 26 1925. The article was republished in Volume 2, Number 2 [?]: 44.
- ²³⁸ Volume 1, Number 5: 29. Diary September 3, 1925 (“rends dans plan avec Diego et Frances” ‘enter into plan with Diego and Frances’). This may be a record of advance planning.
- ²³⁹ Volume 1, Number 5: 29. See also Toor 1932.
- ²⁴⁰ Zurián 2002: 54. Charlot’s diaries contain entries on his work with Ledesma.
- 1926: June 30, September 28 (“vient Ledesma pour article pour magazine” ‘Ledesma comes for article for magazine’), October 27 (“copie article pour Ledesma” ‘copy article for Ledesma’); 1927: April 23, 25 (“envoie article à Ledesma pour Forma” ‘send article to Ledesma for *Forma*’), September 5, December 18, 30 (“photo dessin Orozco pour Forma avec Ledesma” ‘photograph Orozco drawing for Forma with Ledesma’); 1928: September 1, 27 (“porté photo Pach à Ledesma” ‘took Pach photo to Ledesma’).
- Charlot described Ledesma positively in a footnote on *Forma*: “An excellent art magazine edited by Gabriel Fernández Ledesma, a painter and engraver of note” (Orozco 1974: 55, note 40). Renato Molina Enríquez, who had written a negative review of Charlot’s *Massacre* (1923), also wrote for *Forma*. List Arzubide also wrote a note congratulating *Forma*, in Volume 2, Number 6, June 1928: 52.
- ²⁴¹ Diary October 4, 1928; also October 5. Charlot visited the school: “avec Orozco à école de sculpture. avec Ledesma” ‘with Orozco to school of sculpture. with Ledesma’ (October 11, 1927).