CHAPTER FOUR

JEAN CHARLOT'S FRESCO TECHNIQUE

I find myself more at ease with earlier centuries in which the artist was by definition a craftsman. Jean Charlot[215]

For hundreds of years, fresco was the preferred technique of great European painters, one of the most famous being Michelangelo. The technique, however, lost popularity during the nineteenth century and twentieth centuries, until the Mexican muralist revival of the 1920s.[216] Not only was Charlot instrumental in this revival, but one can also easily recognize him as a "master muralist" and a major proponent of fresco in the twentieth century.[217] During his life, Charlot created fresco murals at forty-five sites in Mexico, the United States, and the Pacific Islands.[218]

In the following analysis, I apply semiotic analysis of Charlot's Fijian frescoes and interpret "index-signs" as those individual constructive visual elements that consist of physical (concrete, mortar, pigments) and formal (form, line, color, space) properties. I interpret mortar and pigment as the physical means to create formal elements, as an "index" of the artist's handiwork. The advantage of this approach is that the analysis of an artist's "style" may be arrived at by deductive reasoning based on the art object, versus reliance upon historic tradition. As stated by art historian Vernon Hyde Minor,

> An index does not resemble its object, but it does refer, often times obliquely, to it. Perhaps the best way to consider the indexical in visual art is to think of it in terms of style….Style, as we know, indicates the manner in which a painting is executed, and indexically signals the presence of the hand of the artist. Style points back to the creator.[219]

Index signs also take into account those historic documents and materials that are considered secondary research materials, such as letters, sketches, or drawings that relate to the history and creative process of the art object.[220] Collectively, these properties refer to the artwork as a whole, while simultaneously serving as the foundation for discussing the artist's technique and "style" based on deductive reasoning. By analyzing the physical, constructive properties as index-signs to the artist's "style," I identify features that define Charlot's artistic style as a muralist.

As index-signs, mortar and pigment are materials that encode the structure of the creative process, the artist's formal and intellectual framework. Charlot consciously manipulated mortar and pigment in order to exploit his preferred formal means of expression of line and color. He prioritized line and color as primary tools in pictorial construction. He adopted an architectonic approach toward formal elements that further united the fresco paintings with architecture. This architectonic style is reminiscent of Cubism without coincidence. Charlot once stated that Cubism, was the "language of walls."[221] He admired the artist Cézanne, himself a proto-Cubist, who relied upon nature's intrinsic planes and geometric forms, which articulated the inner relations of the universe.[222]

> And I had that same very strong feeling looking at Cézanne, the way he organizes his landscapes….Now, if we annul the idea of God, certainly the pine trees on one side and the mountains of the other are unrelated. I don't see any possible physical, family relations between the two but the relation between the two exists. I think in all my work it is that relation of otherwise unrelated things that is a theme, maybe one of the deeper themes, and I think that implies God.[223]

Inspired by these Cubist influences, Charlot manipulated line and color by adopting an architectonic approach to combine formal elements that helped to unite the frescoes to the walls and architecture. In Fiji, mortar and pigment create line, color, and form to materialize Charlot's own artistic vision of "painter's Paradise."[224]

Jean Charlot's Technical Approach to Fresco Media

While it is impossible in one study to discuss thoroughly Charlot's lifetime achievements in the fresco technique, a few basic points can be made. Charlot specialized in the *buon fresco*, Italian for the wet fresco technique.[225] The nature of fresco painting requires true artisanship, as it is by definition an intersection of painting and masonry whereby the pigments are applied to wet mortar. As the plaster dries, the images become a permanent part of the architectural wall. This distinguishes it from other types of wall painting where the pigments are set on the surface of the wall. Typically, the mortar involves approximately equal parts of lime and sand, although occasionally cement may be added to the mixture.

Fresco painting is known throughout the history of art and artisans in many different cultures have used the technique. For example, frescoes were painted by the early Mediterranean culture of Minoans to decorate the palace at Knossos, circa 1500 B.C.E., and over a thousand years later to ornament the houses of Pompeii.[226] In the Far East, Buddhist painters practiced fresco painting for centuries.[227] In the heart of Central America, the fresco technique was employed by ancient Mayan painters to record religious and historic events on temple walls.[228] The historic revival of the technique in Western culture is most often associated with the great artists of the Renaissance, such as Giotto, Michelangelo, and Raphael. During the Early Renaissance, Giotto was one of the first to popularize the fresco technique. Charlot often acknowledged his debt to the great master not only for his solutions to the technical matters of fresco, but also for his artistic solutions to problems of representation.[229] Giotto rejected the old fresco method whereby large sections of wall were plastered, in favor of a "new" technique that involved working on small sections sufficient for a day's work. Giotto's "new" formula for fresco painting became the preferred method for later muralists.[230] His formula was recorded by Cennino Cennini, writing at the end of the fourteenth century, in his text *Libro dell'Arte*.[231]

It appears as though Charlot's first frescoes in Mexico, *The Massacre at the Main Temple*, relied heavily on written accounts of fresco making, such as those published in Cennini's book, as well as the assistance of local Mexican masons.[232] As his work matured, Charlot began to modify his fresco process to incorporate local materials. In Hawai'i, he used the indigenous black volcanic pumice in place of regular sand. This substitution provided an added technical bonus, as the rough surfaces of the black sand adhered better to the lime and to the wall.[233] In Fiji, he used river sand and volcanic sand from Namuwaimada beach, located near the mission.[234]

Charlot's frescoes were the products of a complex process whereby he conducted life studies, created full scale drawings, contour line drawings of full-scale cartoons, mixed the mortar and prepared the wall, transferred the "cartoons" to the wall with a nail, mixed pigments, and applied multiple layers of color washes with small, wet

brushstrokes. He respected the materials and the process of fresco production, one that lends itself to reduction of form and composition. The simplification of composition is suggested by the process that takes life studies, enlarges them in size, and then reduces them to primary contour lines that are then transferred onto the surface of the wall.[235]

Index-Signs: Technique as an Indicator of Style

Contour lines. A unique feature of Charlot's fresco process involved the use of a nail in transferring the cartoon to the wall surface. Traditionally, these lines were marked by "pouncing," a process of using a spike roller to puncture holes along the contour lines of the cartoon drawing.[236] Charlot chose to modify this process by using a nail to incise the contour lines deeply in the wet mortar, thereby creating a grooved contour line. This depression allowed the pigments to mix, serving both as color transitions and boundaries between color masses. The bold color of the contour line added to the definition of images, substantiated their own individual mass, and projected them off the surface plane. It also created a low relief surface, reminiscent of the artistic processes of carving and printmaking, enhancing the illusion of three-dimensionality. The graphic quality of the line, as in Charlot's other illustrations, was endowed with a life of its own, finding individual expression within the unity of his paintings.

This emphasis on contour line was fundamental to Charlot's style. Line was a key element of Charlot's art in any media. He practiced this habit of incising contour lines in his frescoes, prints, and even oils. His control of line is exhibited in the uniformity of the relief surface in the mortar and the results of his expressive effect while maintaining an economical approach. This habit may have derived in part from his work as a printmaker and illustrator; during his life, Charlot created over seven hundred original prints and illustrated twenty-seven books.[237] Charlot's line technique was noticed by Carlos Mérida, who once commented that Charlot could take one single line to create an expression, while other artists needed twenty or more.[238]

Pigments and brushstrokes. Traditionally, fresco paints are ground mineral pigments mixed with water.[239] In creating large-scale paintings, such as the monumental examples made by Charlot, fresco is one of the most economical media because the pigments are diluted with water. The pigments must be vigorously ground to a fine powder and thoroughly mixed with water or else colors become uneven. As mineral pigments, the paint tends to settle in the water and must be remixed with almost every brushstroke. Extra water must be removed from the brush prior to the application of the pigment to the wall in order to prevent the paint from running or dripping.[240] The pigment is applied in washes of color because the wet mortar tends to absorb the water and pigment, giving the painted surface a much duller and darker appearance that brightens as it dries. It is difficult, therefore, to establish what the dry color will look like when painting on the wet mortar. It is much easier to go back later to darken the color by applying additional washes of pigment. On the other hand, if the pigment is applied too strongly, it requires repainting the surface first with lime to return it to the original white color, then beginning again to apply the color washes. To estimate properly the correct amount of pigment to achieve the desired effect requires a mastery of the technique acquired only through experience.

Charlot created color through a combination of manipulating the pure lime of the mortar and applying layered washes of pigment. The results are a translucent effect similar to water colors, revealing the lime coat underneath. The white color of the dried lime underneath the color washes brightened the color palette. This effect lightened and unified the entire composition. It physically functioned to attract light into the room. In the Fijian murals, it symbolically served as a metaphor for the “Light of Christ.”

By the time Charlot was working in fresco in Hawai’i, he preferred to use Chinese-style bamboo calligraphy brushes because they could retain a high water content and could be shaped down to a fine point.[241] He applied the pigment to the mortar with a wet brush, using small brush strokes and layered washes. Charlot's technique of using small brushstrokes on wet mortar helped to maintain control of the pigment, particularly challenging to a fresco artist because of the permanency of each stroke. He rarely saturated the color, except to achieve an illusionary or symbolic effect.

For example, in the Fijian triptych, Charlot created an artificial framing of the pictorial imagery that made a circular composition to lead the eye continually back to Christ and the pictorial narrative. For the two end figures in the Black Christ triptych, the Fijian school girl in blue and the Indo-Fijian altar boy in red, Charlot layered the pigment to create an opaque color mass for their clothing.[242] In this case, his opaque use of color reduced the illusionary effect of the recession of the two side panels and helped to project the paintings off the surface of the wall. The strong color unified the entire composition, marking the beginning and ending of the pictorial narrative. The profile and three-quarter profile poses of the two figures, who face inward, direct the viewer's eyes to remain inside the pictorial composition. In contrast to the opaque garments of the two end figures, the interior figures were composed of much lighter washes of pigment, which is more characteristic of Charlot's other frescoes.

Charlot preferred to use a wet brush, small brushstrokes, and light washes of different colors that were intended to blend at a distance to give the illusion of form (Illustration 4.1).[243] The use of small brushstrokes to create large scale frescoes can be traced to Giotto. Charlot's approach to fresco painting could be a consequence of his own physical limitations and ways of seeing, a result of an eye operation when he was seven years old when doctors cut the optical nerve.[244] Referring to the results of the operation, Charlot commented his eyes "never got together, that is I see through one eye or through the other."[245]

Artistic solutions to problems of representation. While Charlot mastered the technical aspects of the media, he was equally diligent in his study of aesthetic problems of representation. He was quick to acknowledge the need to further the complexities of the compositions so as not to interfere with the pictorial narrative.[246] He recognized that part of the challenge of a fresco artist was to paint images in such a way that, despite the various angles, the viewer perceived the painting as a frontal vision. This illusionist perspective required the artist to make certain adaptations that compensated for viewer perspectives, such as the diagonal view characterizing the Fijian frescoes placed high on the walls above the altars.

Charlot recognized two solutions to this problem of distortion. The first one maintained the integrity of the original image and allowed the viewer to experience these distortions firsthand, this solution representing the modern style of his fellow artist José Clemente Orozco.[247] The other method, characterizing the majority of Charlot's murals, was to implement devices or artistic solutions that compensated for the viewer's perspective in an effort to minimize distortions. Commenting later in life, Charlot stated,

> Another thing is, of course, to try to straighten, to keep to a minimum those perspective distortions, and that is my own approach, and I have been able to do it successfully enough so that people are not even conscious of the different devices by which I neutralize those distortions.[248]

One device Charlot employed to neutralize those distortions was to widen the horizontal elements of his subjects, keeping the verticals the same, such that from a distance the figures did not look too thin, an artistic solution utilized by Giotto.[249] Another device used by Charlot was the foreshortening of figures and objects presented at a frontal view. This was accentuated by the presentation of the figures oriented in different directions, their bodies, heads, and hand gestures, in order to create an over-all feeling of depth that likewise offset the two-dimensionality of the wall surface. He also relied on geometric shapes such as spheres, cylinders, and cones that offered identical perspectives from three points of view, the center and two sides.[250]

Charlot's solution of foreshortening was applied to the spatial environment, in that many of his frescoes seem to compress space into the foreground. For example, in the Fijian frescoes, he not only placed his figures in the foreground, but his design and utilization of background space emphasized not the recession of space, but rather projected and pushed the images forward. This effect is achieved through his near abandonment of middle ground. Similarly, the artist manipulated color to help achieve this spatial effect in the Fijian triptych with warm tones and strong values used in the foreground, while cool tones and light values were chosen for the background foilage.

In the case of Charlot, index-signs served as indicators of his unique technical approach to fresco, as well as important elements inherent to his fresco compositions. The analysis of index-signs as physical and formal properties has allowed for the

identification of key elements of Charlot's artistic style. Firstly, in his murals, Charlot practiced a technique of using an incised contour line for visual emphasis, color transitions and to create relief-like effect on the surface area. Secondly, he preferred a wet brush to apply small brushstrokes of light washes of pigment to the lime-covered surface, an effect that resulted in an overall translucent and unified color pallette. Thirdly, Charlot applied various artistic solutions, i.e., widening, foreshortening, and the compression of pictorial space, in order to reduce distortions and to project a frontal vision regardless of the angle from which the paintings were viewed.

Endnotes

[215] Jean Charlot, Interview 4, by John P. Charlot, transcript, 19 September 1970, 4. Jean Charlot Collection.

[216] Jean Charlot, "Fresco," New Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 195.

[217] The title of "master muralist" was first bestowed upon Charlot in an article entitled, "Jean Charlot: A Master Muralist" published in the "Who's Who" section of Art News, Volume XLIV, Number 6 (May 1945) 25.

[218] Zohmah Charlot, 1986.

[219] Ibid., 177.

[220] Ibid., 178.

[221] Jean Charlot, "Daumier's graphic compositions," Miscellaneous Articles Folder, typescript, Jean Charlot papers, Jean Charlot Collection. This article was published in "Daumier's graphic compositions," in Honore Daumier: A Centenary Tribute, edited by Andrew Stasik (New York: Pratt Graphics Center, 1980). See also From the Classicists to the Impressionists: Art and Architecture in the 19th Century, edited by Elizabeth Gilmore Holt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 524.

[222] This comes closest to what Charlot regularly described as the "universal language of art. Miscellaneous Articles Folder, unpublished typescript, Jean Charlot papers, Jean Charlot Collection.

[223] Jean Charlot, Interview 9, by John P. Charlot, transcript, 7 October 1970, 6. Jean Charlot Collection. I further base this conclusion on the following: 1) Cézanne's famous letter dated 15 April 1904, to Emile Bernard, where he writes of the geometric of art-making and viewing nature, "...treat nature by the cylinder, the sphere, the cone, everything in proper perspective, so that each side of an object or plane is directed toward a central point."; 2) Cézanne's letter dated 12 May 1904, "The real and immense study that must be taken up is the manifold picture of nature." Charlot was always copying nature be it outside or from a model or photograph, and 3) Cézanne's style not only bridged nineteenth and twentieth century art, but it provided a suitable approach for the mural format. In fact, Cézanne painted a series of murals in his home in Aix, "Four Seasons." Linda Nochlin, Impressionism and Post-Impressionism 1874-1904 (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966), 83-107.

[224] Jean Charlot, "Work in Hawai'i," Interview, by John P. Charlot, transcript, 24 April 1978, Jean Charlot Collection.

[225] Jean Charlot, Fresco Painting in Mexico, 510-511.

[226] Richard G. Tansley and Fred S. Kleiner, Gardner's Art Through the Ages, tenth edition (New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1996), 104-106, and 209-217.

[227] For information on fresco painting in India see Roy Craven, “Ajanta,” in Indian Art (London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd, 1976), 121-131, and in Southeast Asia see Philip Rawson, The Art of Southeast Asia (London: Thames and Hudson, 1967), 194-195.

[228] Jean Charlot, “A Twelfth Century Mayan Mural" in Art From Mayans to Disney (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1939), 26-41.

[229] See for example Jean Charlot, Interview 3, by John Charlot, transcript, 17 September 1970, 4. Jean Charlot Collection.

[230] Art Book: Giotto, (London: Dorling Kindersley, 1999), 30.

[231] Ibid.

[232] Jean Charlot 1963, 181. According to John P. Charlot, another book consulted by Charlot for his first fresco was La Fresque: sa technique, ses applications by Paul Albert Baudouin, (Paris: *Librairie Centrale des Beaux Arts*, 1914). John P. Charlot, “Jean Charlot’s First Fresco: *The Massacre at the Main Temple,*” 3.

[233] Martin Charlot, Interview 4, by Caroline Klarr.

[234] Ratu Nagonelevu, Interview 11, by Caroline Klarr, 1 October 1999, Rokovuaka, Ra, Fiji.

[235] Charlot summarized the mural preparation as follows: “To compose, the muralist must read a spirit level, use a plumb line, swing a compass, string a ruled line, slacken a catenary line; to draw he must stylize a first sketch to mural status, enlarge it on brown paper, retrace on tracing paper, punch it with pin or roulette, pass it and brush it on the scratch coat, pounce it on the final coat of sand and lime, preparatory to painting. By the time the drawing is transferred to the wall it has exchanged the qualities of spontaneity and impromptu for a dose of impersonal monumentality." Jean Charlot, “Public Speaking in Paint,” 36.

[236] John P. Charlot, “Jean Charlot’s First Fresco: *The Massacre at the Main Temple,*” 4.

[237] The Jean Charlot Foundation informational pamphlet, Jean Charlot Foundation, University of Hawai’i, Honolulu.

[238] Valda "Weetie" Watson, Interview 18, by Caroline Klarr, 20 September 1999, Nadi, Fiji.

[239] Watercolors may also be substituted. Martin Charlot, Interview 4, by Caroline Klarr, June 2001, Naiserelagi, Fiji.

[240] Based on my experience working with Martin Charlot, June 2001, Naiserelagi, Ra, Fiji.

[241] John P. Charlot, Interview 3, by Caroline Klarr.

[242] Please refer to Illustration 5.1.

[243] Illustration 4.1. Detail of brushwork, *The Annunciation*, Jean Charlot, fresco,1962-63, St. Francis Xavier’s Catholic Church, Naiserelagi, Fiji. Photo Caroline Klarr, June 2001.

[244] Jean Charlot, Interview 12 by John P. Charlot, transcript, 16 October 1970, “I got terribly crosseyed....I never could focus both eyes on the same thing. So when I was seven years old the eye that was the worst, the doctors cut the optical nerve.…So from then on, I could see with both eyes.” Jean Charlot Collection.

[245] Jean Charlot, Interview 18, by John P. Charlot, transcript, 18 November 1970, 8. Jean Charlot Collection.

[246] Jean Charlot, Interview 3, by John Charlot, transcript, 17 September 1970, 6. Jean Charlot Collection.

[247] Ibid.

[248] Ibid, 3.

[249] Ibid.

[250] Jean Charlot, “Public Speaking in Paint,” 31.

Illustration 4.1. Detail of brushwork, *The Annunciation,* Jean Charlot, fresco, 1962-63, St. Francis Xavier's Catholic Church, Naiserelagi, Fiji. Photo Caroline Klarr, June 2001.

CHAPTER FIVE

JEAN CHARLOT'S FIJIAN FRESCOES: COMMISSION, BACKGROUND, AND TECHNIQUE

> *But I have a great conscience, I would say, when I do a job to do it according to the practical lines that are proposed to me. And for example, I receive, well, rulings you could say, from the people who commissioned the things and sometimes those are very strict, and I try always to follow them*. Jean Charlot[251]

Jean Charlot painted three frescoes at the church of St. Francis Xavier Catholic Mission, Naiserelagi village, Viti Levu Island, Fiji. The central fresco is a triptych panel located in the apse of the church, entitled *Black Christ and Worshipers* (Illustration 5.1).[252] The triptych is located above the main altar of the church and measures thirty feet in width by ten feet in height. It is divided into three panels of ten feet by ten feet. The side panels are positioned at an approximate 35-degree angle off the central triptych panel, in accordance with the architecture. The base of the frescoes is approximately twelve feet off the main floor, and ten feet from the base of the dais. Two side altars, dedicated to St. Joseph and the Virgin Mary, are on right angles off the front of the apse. Each of the altars is accompanied by a fresco, *St. Joseph's Workshop* (Illustration 5.2) and *The Annunciation* (Illustration 5.3), each eight feet wide by twelve feet in height. [253]

The central panel of the triptych features a crucified Black Christ. The Christ figure is placed in a frame of lush foliage of native breadfruit and *yaqona* (*kava*) plants. The Christ figure wears only native bark cloth, while at the left of his feet rest offerings of *yaqona*, represented by the ceremonial bowl, a wooden *tanoa*, ornamented with a sennit cord and shells, and the Fijian *bilo*, a coconut serving cup, placed upside down beside the *tanoa*. In a complementary composition, a brass bowl with three plumes of camphor smoke rises up to the right of the Christ figure.

On the left panel of the triptych, Charlot painted four local Fijians, Teresia Tinai, Archbishop Petero Mataca, Maria Gemma, and Selestino Naucukidi Koloaia, all

grouped around the the patron saint of the Pacific, Saint Peter Chanel. On the far left, a young Fijian school girl, Tinai, stands in prayer, a banana blossom above her head. To her right, Chanel holds the Fijian war club responsible for his martyrdom. A Fijian priest, Mataca, was a visiting priest at Naiserelagi at the time of Charlot's stay in Fiji. A local Fijian woman, Gemma, approaches Christ with an offering of female cultural arts and wealth, *i yau*, in the form of a *vo'ivo'i*, or pandanas mat. These mats are the products of women's labors, and Charlot represented the Virgin Mary in the act of plaiting a similar mat in his depiction of *The Annunciation*, the subject of the fresco above the right side altar. Another local Fijian, Koloaia, is illustrated approaching Christ with a *tabua*, or whale's tooth. *Tabua* are traditional gifts associated with respect, forgiveness, retribution, and ceremony. The *tanoa* bowl, the *tabua* offering, and the war club are male hieratic arts and icons of native Fijian religion and ritual, now being offered and/or surrendered to Christ.

In the right panel of the triptych, an Indo-Fijian woman, Teresia Naresh, approaches with a floral neck garland in her hands. Camphor and flowers, appropriate offerings for Indian gods, are presented here to the crucified Christ. An Indo-Fijian man, Peter Ambika Nand, plays the role of the shepherd, leading his pair of oxen out of the bush. On the right side of this panel, Charlot featured St. Francis Xavier, the patron Saint of India, Japan and the Catholic Mission at Naiserelagi. On the far right, a young Indo-Fijian boy, Narendra, stands holding a lit candle beneath an uncurling fern frond, which like the banana flower above the Fijian school girl, is a visual metaphor alluding to their young age and life blossoming in the service of God.

By the time Charlot arrived in Fiji, he was painting as a mature artist at the age of sixty-four. The Fijian frescoes are, therefore, some of the last monumental frescoes the artist completed during his lifetime. By this time, both his style and technique of making fresco were firmly established. Despite his experience, however, the artist was challenged by his work in Fiji.[254] In one letter to her son John, dated 16 November 1962, Zohmah wrote, " ...sort of worried because Papa had sounded a little disconsolate the evening before....I asked Papa how he was feeling, and he said it is just that the middle of a fresco job is very intense (Illustration 5.4)."[255]

In the previous Chapter, I discussed index-signs as the formal and physical properties of Charlot's fresco technique. It is important to bear in mind that index-signs, as signs that establish physical and natural referents to the art object, include related ethnohistoric texts and visual documents. In the following analysis, I draw from materials in the Jean Charlot Collection including Charlot's diaries, letters of correspondence and several of Zohmah Charlot's published articles relating to the Fijian frescoes, as well as the visual records, i.e., sketchbooks and catalogued drawings, that illustrated the evolution of the final format of the Fijian murals. Taken together, these index-signs provide insight into Charlot's Fijian commission and fresco technique in Fiji.

Artist and Patron: Jean Charlot and Monsignor Franz Wasner

Jean Charlot's Fijian frescoes were commissioned by the Catholic Monsignor Franz Wasner. An interesting man in his own right, Wasner is best remembered as the private Chaplain of the Von Trapp Family made famous in the film *The Sound of Music*. Charlot met Wasner and the Trapp family through Father John MacDonald, the Chaplain of the Newman Club, in the early 1950s, at the University of Hawai'i.[256] In a Christmas letter from Maria Von Trapp dated 11 February 1954, she wrote, "Among the new friends we made there is Jean Charlot, the famous painter. We admired his murals and enjoyed greatly his company. We spent unforgettable hours with Father McDonald and the Charlots and the members of the Newman Club."[257]

After his service with the Trapp family, Monsignor Wasner asked to be sent to Fiji, where he was stationed at St. Francis Xavier's Catholic Mission at Naiserelagi. The church building of St. Francis Xavier's Catholic Mission was begun in 1908, to replace the original wooden church, which had been destroyed in a hurricane. The new church was built up on Navunibitu hill, with a stunning view overlooking Viti Levu Bay. It took four years to quarry the stone to build the church, and the foundation stone was laid in 1912.[258] The church building is an impressive site, all the more so when one considers the isolated location, limited access to tools and materials, and sophisticated architectural design, including the complicated wooden-beam open ceiling. It is difficult

to imagine building it today, much less ninety years ago. Today, the old stone church looms like a small mountain, standing well over forty feet high (Illustration 5.5).[259]

The church at Naiserelagi was built originally by the French Marist Missionaries, who were part of the French Order of the Sacred Heart. This Order was known for their gradualist and integrative approach, where indigenization of the Church's role was an integral part of the philosophy of Christian missions. Priests learned local language and studied local customs as part of the Church's syncretistic approach.[260] As part of either this larger missionary tradition, and/or Wasner's own personal vision, the Catholic Church at Naiserelagi became "indigenized," taking on a distinctive island flavor. Inside the church, mats rested on the ground in place of pews, and indigenous bark cloth, *masi*, hung behind the altar. In his letters, Wasner suggested more than once that he wished Charlot to design a mural that showed the different ethnic groups of Fiji, native islanders, Indo-Fijians, and Caucasian-Europeans, all united under Christ.[261] Wasner's vision was realized in the triptych altar painting of the *Black Christ with Worshipers*. The two complementary frescoes*, St. Joseph's Workshop* and *The Annunciation*, situated to either side of the main altar, were completed as a Christmas gift for Zohmah Charlot, the artist's wife.[262]

The original idea for the commission derived from Wasner, as described in a letter to Jean Charlot dated 7 February 1961.

> Dear Mr. Charlot...On my way to Fiji I spent a week on Kauai Island. I said my daily mass in the new St. Catherine's Church, on the main altar. Your work, there, on the wall, impressed me more and more as the days went on. When I took over my mission here in Fiji last October the uninspired inside decoration of my church here did the very opposite to me, it depressed me more and more with every day. Then the thought came to me to ask you to come here and do to this church what you did to St. Catherine's—give it a powerful accent and breathe some life into it.[263]

In his letter, Wasner was referring to Charlot's fresco mural, *The Compassionate Christ*. This mural hangs in the retable, behind the main altar, at the Marist Catholic Church St. Catherine's in Kapa'a, Kaua'i, Hawai'i (Illustration 5.6).[264] Charlot completed this fresco, which measured ten by seven feet, in 1958. The subject matter illustrated a group of figures around the central figure of a robed Christ ascending to heaven.

In keeping with the recommendations of Vatican II, Wasner's vision of using music and art as key elements in his missionary efforts began to be realized when he organized the parishioners into singing a complete mass in Latin.[265] But by 1965, he had mastered the Fijian language to the extent that he was able to offer the first mass held exclusively in Fijian.[266] In one of her letters home, Zohmah wrote, "Wasner is trying to find all he can of their old music. He would like to use it as good strong stuff for the glory of God."[267] Wasner's experience with the Trapp family singers allowed him to be predisposed to the organization of a singing group. While he was able to fulfill his desire for choral worship himself, he called upon Charlot to create an equally inspiring pictorial environment. Outside the church at Naiserelagi, "the Place of Heavenly Song," nature provided a suitable site for visual meditation and contemplation.[268] Inside, the creation of a suitable spiritual, visual counterpart was left to the artist Jean Charlot.

The Commission of Jean Charlot's Fijian Fresco Murals

In a series of letters written between 7 February 1961 and 13 August 1962, Wasner slowly outlined his commission request.[269] In his early letters he included several photographs, described the province of Ra, where the church is located, the topography, and the people of the church community. In his first letter, dated 7 February 1961, Wasner stated that all walls were at the artist's disposal and elaborated on the possibilities and potential of Charlot's future work, suggesting that subject matter include Indians, Chinese, Europeans, half-castes, and Fijians, as "the Nations of the World become one family in Christ."[270] He mentioned Fijian culture and ceremony as potential topics:

> Fijian ceremonial would offer lovely subjects to paint: drinking kava-Eucharist; offering of tambua to Christ, offerings of foods, mats. It seems to me—a layman speaking, of course—that the horizontal of your work in the Bank in Waikiki and the vertical of St. Catherine's could be in some way combined, the horizontal expressing the natural level—differentiation, the vertical the supernatural unity.[271]

Wasner was referring to Charlot's liturgical mural in Kapa'a, *The Compassionate Christ*, and *Early Contacts of Hawaii with the Outer World*, completed in 1952 in Waikiki. The Waikiki mural measured eleven by sixty-seven feet and featured subject matter

illustrating scenes from Hawaiian history, culture, arts, and landscape. The original Waikiki fresco was destroyed and then repainted in 1966, at a different location in Waikiki (now First Hawaiian Bank).

It is clear from the final composition of the *Black Christ* triptych that Charlot took Wasner's "suggestions" seriously, adhering to the majority of his ideas. What is interesting is how he chose to interpret these "suggestions." Based on his sketchbooks and diaries, in comparison with the final paintings, Charlot changed his mind a number of times as to the subject matter and the composition of the completed triptych. In an interview, Charlot commented on one of his goals in painting, "I think that in the visual arts as a painter if I express, if I like to express something, it is a sort of simplicity. It is arrived at, not through simple ways, but I get there eventually."[272] Perhaps for this reason Charlot abandoned his early ideas of a more dynamic composition in favor of more sedate or still figures, predominately vertical in their "spiritual unity," presented in static poses with movement implied through hand gestures frozen in time. Wasner continued in the letter to describe Charlot's potential work as "an eminently missionary effort," "the first of its kind in these islands," and "a lovely coincidence that a French painter would do this, for until recently the mission was French-Marist."[273] Charlot's correspondence with Wasner, dated to 28 February 1962, documented his acceptance of the commission.[274] In a series of letters dated between 13 March 1962 and 16 June 1962, Wasner discussed dates and travel possibilities with Charlot.[275]

On 21 May 1962, Wasner sent Charlot a list of questions about what was needed in the way of materials and wall preparations. While Charlot's original letter is not available, based on Wasner's next two letters, Charlot must have replied stating he planned to paint a triptych scene over the main altar and that the wall should be prepared accordingly. In Wasner's letter dated 27 June 1962, it appears that the apsidal wall of the church had been covered in cement by his "Austrian helper and cement-expert," Franz Glinserer, in preparation for Charlot's arrival. Wasner asked Charlot "whether the final painted coat could be applied by you if he [Franz] with a sharp hammer roughed the existing surface...The new surface...of course, will be finished as you suggested. Three panels yes."[276] Wasner filled his two letters with suggestions as

to what he would like to see depicted in the fresco. In the same letter dated 27 June he wrote,

> Subject: Christ crucified in the middle panel...Fijians and Indians are the major races in Fiji today...These two groups, I feel, should be given major space, and shown in their way of life....Would it be possible to represent Christ crucified in a manner that would indicate that body mass on the altar below.[277]

In another letter to Charlot, dated 13 August 1962, Wasner elaborated on the topic of breadfruit, either because Charlot mentioned it in his letter or because it was Wasner's own idea, one cannot be sure.

> Breadfruit trees would walk into the house and church if we'd let them. By the way, the Fijian word for Breadfruit is "uto" = Heart. Since the Sacred Heart is Patron of the Fiji Vicariate would you agree to show Christ's sacred heart on the outside….Symbolism would embrace from all sides.[278]

In this same letter, Wasner stated that the inner walling over the windows in the apse was finished and that they would "continue in accordance with your instructions, i.e., dash coat as soon as walls are dry."[279] Wasner indicated that he was searching for the required materials, including lime putty, butcher paper, and pigments.[280] Traveling via ship, the *Arcadia*, from Vancouver, Canada, via Honolulu, Hawai'i, and then on to Fiji by way of the ship *Orsova*, Jean, Zohmah, and Martin Charlot arrived in Suva on 22 September 1962. True to his word, Wasner paid their passages which cost, based on a notice from Hunt's Travel Service, approximately US $2,000.[281]

The Technical and Aesthetic Evolution of Jean Charlot's Fijian Frescoes

Charlot commented that the Fijian paintings "would be carried out in the fresco technique—painted on fresh lime plaster."[282] The best sources for comprehending the evolution of the Fijian murals are Jean Charlot's own diaries and daily log, as well as the artist's surviving sketchbooks, mural cartoons, and full-scale drawings, supplemented by Zohmah's original letters of correspondence and publications. From Charlot's notations, it is possible to assign dates to some of the sketches and drawings in the Jean Charlot Collection at the University of Hawai'i-Manoa. The Jean Charlot Collection presently includes two sketchbooks and twenty-eight catalogued drawings pertaining to

the Fijian frescoes, all of them exclusively addressing the subject matter in the central triptych.[283] The drawings include three cartoons for the triptych, which is unusual, because cartoon tracings are used in the transfer of the original drawing to the wall, the outlines being transferred to the wall with a nail. This process often destroys the cartoons, and it is rare that examples survive intact (Illustration 5.7).[284] Based on her memories and correspondences, Zohmah also published several short articles about the Fiji frescoes. In a letter to Carl Wright dated 10 October 1962, Zohmah wrote, "Today is the first day of painting....Jean is beginning even before all the sketching is done".[285]

There are two sketchbooks in the Jean Charlot Collection that contain pencil sketches as preliminary studies for the Fijian frescoes. The sketchbooks reveal Charlot's techniques, for example, how he enlarged his portraits placing a graph overlay of transparent paper on top of the drawing that was then used to enlarge the image. Charlot utilized this technique to enlarge his preparatory drawings of the Fijian priest (now Archbishop Petero Mataca), St. Francis Xavier and the Indo-Fijian woman with a garland (based on Teresa Naresh). Two completed drawings of the enlarged version of Mataca's portrait survive and are currently part of the catalogued images in the Jean Charlot Collection (Illustration 5.8).[286]

Charlot's sketches and drawings indicate that his original idea for the Fijian panel was to feature the *yaqona* ceremony, but there is no indication of the presentation of the whale's tooth or mats (Illustration 5.9).[287] Exactly when he decided to modify his composition of the *yaqona* ceremony to incorporate the whale's tooth, *tabua*, we cannot be certain. The ideas for the Fijian panel to include the *yaqona* and *tabua* ceremonies were originally mentioned in Wasner's letters.[288] Charlot could not, however, have missed their significance upon arriving at Naiserelagi, in September 1962, where he participated in both ceremonies during a welcoming *veqaravi* as the guest of honor, where he was received as a high chief.[289] Charlot was a keen observer of life and art wherever he went. He recognized that certain objects contained intrinsic value for the societies that created them and endowed them with cultural meaning. His final decision

to alter the composition and to incorporate the presentational offerings of *yaqona*, *tabua,* and mats must have derived from his own life experiences, when he too received such chiefly gifts his first night at Naiserelagi. Other changes are mentioned in his diaries and daily log, for example, the entry dated 26 October 1962, where Charlot mentioned that he planned to "move Chanel and Mataca 4" back, to make place for "woman w. mat," perhaps because he had been presented with mats at his welcoming ceremony.[290] Likewise, in his preliminary sketch for the Indo-Fijian panel, he sketched a woman moving in the direction of Christ with a brass bowl (Illustration 5.10).[291]

Throughout Charlot's journal entries and Zohmah's letters, it seems as though the artist was struggling with the mortar not drying in the damp and humid climate of Fiji. For example, in her letter dated 11 October 1962, to her son John, Zohmah writes, "Papa started painting yesterday, some difficulties with the mortar drying but he is anxious to see what happens with the improvised means. Martin had to get sand from the river and sift and wash." In her letter to Carl Wright dated 20 November 1962, she subsequently recorded,

> Jean['s] fresco progresses slowly, with the coming of the rains the light is worse than ever up near the church ceiling, and the mortar is very slow in drying. Franz Glinserer who is acting as mason is getting up at 3 and 4 in the morning to put on the day's painting surface, even so it is often noon before Jean can start work. He is necessarily working on small daily pieces, very detailed and complicated. He groaned the other evening, 'My God, I am learning new things about fresco, and I surely didn't need to know more.'[292]

In Fiji, Charlot received assistance with masonry from the resident Austrian Franz Glinserer, whom Wasner referred to in his letters as his "cement-expert." It can be established from Zohmah's letters that Glinserer assisted Charlot with the masonry of the frescoes, the majority of which consisted of a combination of local sand and lime (Illustration 5.11).[293]

> Sand has to be dug out of the stream, washed and sifted. Quicklime has to be soaked, once a supply is located and a cane truck company commandeered to drop it off down on the King's Road.[294]

Wasner mentioned his search for lime putty and the possibility of ordering lime through an artist's supply shop in Suva, but it is more likely that Charlot acquired the lime from

the nearby Fiji Sugar Corporation, in Vaileka town, where the company made use of lime to bleach the sugar.

During an interview with Selestino Naucukidi Koloaia, one of Charlot's models (the Fijian man with the whale's tooth immediately to the left of Christ), I was introduced to Koloaia's son, Ratuwaisea Nagonelevu, who claimed to have assisted Charlot with some of the mortar.[295] According to Nagonelevu, in his recollections of the artist, Charlot tried an atypical approach to fresco painting, one that incorporated a material called cemestick in place of the lime. Charlot may have tried this type of mortar in part of the two side altar panels because of a combination of damp weather, which inhibits the drying process, and Charlot's limited time restraints. There is some evidence that Charlot changed his formula for the mortar, at least for part of the side frescoes, to cemestick, perhaps because he had made the decision to paint the two side panels after he arrived in Fiji and had already made plans to depart on January 6. Therefore, he was seeking a mortar that would dry more quickly than the mixture he used to complete the triptych.

Generally, cemestick is mixed with water, cement, and sand. Nagonelevu recalled the proportions of the mixture as six drums of sand mixed with one drum of cement and one gallon of cemestick. The cemestick is added to the drum of water until it turns a milky white. Nagonelevu also recalled collecting sand at a nearby beach Namuwaimada.[296] It is possible this new formula is what Zohmah was referring to in her letter, and substantiated by Charlot's diary entry dated Sunday 16 December 1962, where he wrote, "Franz samples colored cement for 'frame' side panels."[297] Throughout his diary entries for the week of 16-22 December, Charlot repeatedly mentioned the application of the cement "frame," i.e., a *trompe l'oeil* architectural frame for the side altar panels.[298]

It is possible that Charlot's decision to use the cemestick for the *trompe l'oeil* frame may have been also a conscious attempt to create an artistic and architectural transition between the frescoes and the cement-covered stone that characterized the interior church architecture. The diagonal foreshortening of Charlot's stone bricks created the illusion of spatial recession, giving the sense of looking through a picture

window. This architectural "frame" is composed of deep earth tones of tan, brown, and red, in contrast to the triptych's transparent colors unified by the lime undercoat (Illustration 5.12).[299] The remaining portions of the side altar fresco paintings seem to have been made not from cement but from a lime and sand mortar similar to that used in the triptych.[300] During a return trip to Fiji in February 1977, Charlot spent an afternoon completing a number of repairs and touch-ups to the murals.[301] Martin Charlot concluded, after completing the restoration of the frescoes in 2001, that the *trompe l'oeil* framework of the adjacent frescoes of *St. Joseph's Workshop* and *The Annunciation* appeared to have been painted in cement, based on the way the wall took the fresco pigments. Martin believed cement may have been used to repair damage to the Fijian school girl (Teresia Tinai) featured in the triptych.[302]

Charlot's diary entry for 12 December 1962 documented that on this day he painted Monsignor Wasner's biretta. Charlot's notation, "his signature on ledge Francisco Wasner rector MCMLXII," suggests that it was Wasner who actually signed his name in the wet mortar.[303] On the following day the artist completed the fresco. His diary entry reads, "Johannes Charlot compleuit 13-12-62," while he signed the fresco, "Johannes Charlot, pictor, 13-12-62." Additional notes in the diary read, "Franz and Martin lower scaffold." December 13 was also Zohmah's birthday.[304]

A blessing ceremony was held on Saturday, 15 December 1962. Charlot's diary entry on this date speaks of cleaning up the mission in preparation for the celebration. Formal invitations were printed in Suva and mailed out to appropriate personages. The event was attended by a variety of people, including the models featured in the fresco, parishioners, local chiefs, church officials and other local residents.[305] The service was presided over by Father Clerkin.[306] In her letter to her son John, dated 16 December Zohmah wrote,

> We had the dedication yesterday and everything went off splendidly. The weather first of all was gorgeous. The mural gorgeous. The feast gorgeous—all spread on the mats on the ground in a specially built [shelter of] bamboo-coconut palm fronds, and such food. We ate with our fingers with banana [leaves] for plates. Goat meat curry, beef, greens in coconut and coconuts for drinks.[307]

The temporary structure referred to is known in Fiji as a *vaka tunaloa* and is set up outside for special occasions and celebrations. The foods described in the letter typify feasts in Fiji that tend to be multicultural, featuring dishes from the Fijian *lovo*, the traditional earth oven, Indian curries, and Chinese cuisine. Charlot's diaries also noted the performance of men's traditional dance or *meke*, as part of the Fijian celebration.[308] In his diary, Charlot noted having witnessed one type of *meke*, which he described as "one w. war clubs" (*meke i wau*). Selestino Naucukidi Koloaia, who performed some of these *meke*, recalled one type as a *meke iri*, or fan dance.[309] Charlot seemed genuinely impressed by these performances and they became a common theme in his later oil paintings and prints (Illustration 3.2).[310]

The Side Altar Frescoes: *St. Joseph's Worksho*p and *The Annunciation*

The Fijian frescoes also have great sentimental value as a memorial of the relationship of the artist and his wife. In the bottom right corner of *The Annunciation*, the artist dedicated the side altar frescoes with the inscription, "For Zohmah, J.C." Zohmah, who accompanied her husband to Fiji, wrote in her private letters describing *The Black Christ* as "a masterpiece."[311] Charlot's original Fijian commission for a mural at the Mission church at Naiserelagi involved painting the triptych only. At some point after arriving in Fiji, Charlot decided to paint two additional frescoes, over the two side altars dedicated to Joseph and Mary.[312] It appears the idea may have originated with Zohmah; writing to her son John, she stated, "Papa is giving them a masterpiece (It took all Monsignor's money for our fare here). I am hoping he will feel like painting the walls over the two side altars as well as the 3 center ones."[313] Charlot not only completed the triptych on Zohmah's birthday, but he also presented her with an early Christmas present on 23 December 1962, a card with two small sketches of his intended compositions for the additional frescoes.[314] The card read, "A Happy Christmas 1962 for Zohmah. The frescoes that would never have been if it was not that she asked for them! Love, Jean" (Illustration 5.13).[315] This sketch is the only extant drawing that documents Charlot's compositions prior to completing the frescoes; no sketches or other preparatory drawings are known to exist.

Charlot's final decision regarding his choice of subject matter for these two side panels seems to have been influenced not only by the Fijian culture in which he found himself immersed, but also by the liturgical calendar of the Catholic Church. In keeping with the Catholic/Christian calendar that begins with Advent, the four week period of preparation before Christmas, the birth of Christ, Charlot began the side panels during Advent and the lighting of the Advent wreath. The wreath contains four candles, each lit during the four consecutive weeks of Advent and each marking an important event in the Biblical narrative of Christ. In the second week of Advent, the candle is lit to commemorate the message the angel Gabriel brought to the Virgin Mary, the narrative subject matter of *The Annunciation*.[316] Charlot began to draw his Fijian *The Annunciation* on December 19, his diary entry reading, "Paper right panel, Draw right panel = Annunciation. Franz traces geometrices of left panel." The following day the 'geometrices' were traced on the right panel.[317]

Charlot's diary entries for the next two days, 21 and 22 December, document that the Austrian assistant, Franz, put up the mortar for the right and left frame panels, at which time Charlot also began to trace and paint. By 23 December, Charlot had broken down the future work into eight tasks. In his diary on the following day he cited "Task 1 (side altars)" as "bust St. Joseph (Left 1)."[318] On Christmas Day, the artist stopped work and resumed work on 28 December, when he identified "Task 2" as equaling "Right 1 (Angel's head and cloak)."[319] His diary entries are incomplete for the next few days, listing tasks three and four without providing further information as to what these tasks involved. The next detailed entry was dated 31 December and listed the following:

> Knock off piece (beam) painted wrong
> After evening prayers = paint beam piec[e]
> Franz puts mortar for tomorrow
> We trace just before midnight.[320]

Charlot began the new year working on task five, "L-3 = workbench Joseph." An additional note in this entry documented another correction, "Lime touch head Mary in Annunciation."[321] This entry also recorded that Franz continued to apply the mortar in the evening for the next day's work. On January 2, the artist concentrated on the

angel's body, while Franz applied the mortar in the evening. The next day Charlot listed task seven as "left 4 (last) Fini 'Joseph Workshop' take scaffold down."[322] He completed *The Annunciation* on January 4, labeling it "Task 8 (last) R 4."[323]

Ethnohistoric documents and visual records are index-signs that reveal important information regarding the commission and evolution of Charlot's Fijian frescoes. First, Wasner's letters of correspondence to Charlot outlined his request for the Fijian triptych to include a crucifixion, the local Fijian ethnic groups, and native symbols, such as the breadfruit. Second, besides establishing firm dates for the order of production of the frescoes, as well as many of the drawings in the Jean Charlot Collection, Charlot's diaries, combined with the visual records, establish the evolution of his intellectual choices for the final composition of his Fijian murals. Third, the diaries and visual records, supplemented by Zohmah's letters, identify the exact materials used in the Fijian frescoes, their sources, and the problems of production. Through examination of these documents it is possible to obtain a better understanding of the manner Charlot chose to meet the requests of the patron and the challenges of the commission, while he continued to create paintings that manifested his own unique artistic vision.

Endnotes

[251] Jean Charlot, Interview 3, by John P. Charlot, transcript, 17 September 1970, 1. Jean Charlot Collection.

[252] Illustration 5.1. *Black Christ and Worshipers*, Jean Charlot, fresco, triptych, 1962. St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, Naiserelagi, Fiji. Photo Jesse Ulrick, September 2002. Collection of Caroline Klarr. See also Illustration 1.3. Jean Charlot's Fijian frescoes, St. Francis Xavier Catholic Mission, Naiserelagi, Fiji. Photo Jesse Ulrick, September 2002. Collection of Caroline Klarr.

[253] Illustration 5.2. *St. Joseph's Workshop*, Jean Charlot, fresco, 1962-63, altar panel, east transept, St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, Naiserelagi, Fiji. Photo Jesse Ulrick, September 2002. Collection of Caroline Klarr. Illustration 5.3. *The Annunciation*, Jean Charlot, fresco, 1962-63, altar panel, west transept, St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, Naiserelagi, Fiji. Photo Jesse Ulrick, September 2002. Collection of Caroline Klarr.

[254] "Problems with mortar," Zohmah Charlot, Letter of correspondence to John P. Charlot, 11 October 1962. Private collection of John P. Charlot. "Rain" cited in Jean Charlot Diary 1962 (various entries November 11, 16, 18-21, etc.), Jean Charlot Collection.

[255] Zohmah Charlot, Letter of correspondence to John P. Charlot,16 November 1962. Private collection of John P. Charlot. Illustration 5.4. Jean Charlot working on *Black Christ*, 1962, Naiserelagi, Fiji. Original photo Martin Charlot. Courtesy of Jean Charlot Collection.

[256] Father MacDonald organized a singing group on Kaua'i and introduced the Charlots to the Trapp family. He was also influential in arranging for Charlot to create his frescoes and liturgical works on Kaua'i. Jean Charlot, Interview 3, by John P. Charlot.

[257] Maria Von Trapp, Letter of correspondence to Charlot family,11 February 1954. Fiji File, Jean Charlot Collection.

[258] Margaret Knox, Voyage of Faith (Suva, Fiji: Archdiocese of Suva, 1997), 85.

[259] Illustration 5.5. Exterior of St. Francis Xavier's Catholic Church, Naiserelagi, Fiji. Photo Caroline Klarr, July 2001.

[260] Susan Cochrane, Contemporary Art in Papua New Guinea (Sydney: Craftsman House, 1997), 24.

[261] Franz Wasner, Letters of correspondence to Jean Charlot. Fiji File, Jean Charlot Collection.

[262] Jean Charlot completed the *Black Christ* triptych on Zohmah's birthday, 13 December 1962. Shortly thereafter, the artist created a Christmas card for Zohmah dedicating the two side fresco panels in Fiji to her as a present. "A Happy Christmas 1962 for Zohmah. The frescos that would never have been had if it not that she asked for them! Love, Jean," Jean Charlot papers, Jean Charlot Collection.

[263] Franz Wasner, Letter of correspondence to Jean Charlot, 7 February 1961. Fiji File, Jean Charlot Collection.

[264] Illustration 5.6. *The Compassionate Christ*, Jean Charlot, fresco, 1958, altar panel, St. Catherine's Catholic Church, Kapa'a, Kaua'i, Hawai'i. Courtesy of Jean Charlot Collection.

[265] "The whole mass is a song...." Zohmah Charlot to Carl Wright, 10 October 1962. Fiji File, Jean Charlot Collection.

[266] Franz Wasner, Letters of corresondence to Charlots, 19 and 26 January 1965. Fiji File, Jean Charlot Collection.

[267] Zohmah Charlot, Letter of correspondence to John P. Charlot, 11 October 1962. John P. Charlot, private collection.

[268] Zohmah Charlot, "'The Place of Heavenly Song; The Evolution of a Mural: Zohmah Charlot Describes—Step by Step—Her Husband's Work," Honolulu Beacon (December 1964)16-18, 49-54.

[269] Fiji File Folder, Jean Charlot papers, Jean Charlot Collection.

[270] Franz Wasner to Jean Charlot, Letter of correspondence, 7 February 1961. Fiji File, Jean Charlot Collection.

[271] Ibid.

[272] Jean Charlot, Interview 8, by John Charlot, transcript, 5 October 1970, 7. Jean Charlot Collection.

[273] Franz Wasner, Letter of correspondence to Jean Charlot, 7 February 1961. Fiji File, Jean Charlot Collection.

[274] Jean Charlot, Letter of correspondence to Franz Wasner, 28 February 1962. Fiji file, Jean Charlot Collection.

[275] Franz Wasner, Letter of correspondence to Jean Charlot, 16 June 1962. Fiji File, Jean Charlot Collection.

[276] Franz Wasner, Letter of correspondence to Jean Charlot, 27 June 1962. Fiji File, Jean Charlot Collection.

[277] Ibid.

[278] Franz Wasner, Letter of correspondence to Jean Charlot, 13 August 1962. Fiji File, Jean Charlot Collection.

[279] Ibid.

[280] Ibid.

[281] Hunt's Travel Service, Letter of correspondence to Jean Charlot, 11 July 1962. Fiji File, Jean Charlot Collection.

[282] Fiji Times, 2 October 1962, entitled, “Noted Artist to Paint Mural in Colony.” Fiji File, Jean Charlot Collection.

[283] Appendix D. Jean Charlot’s Preparatory for the Fijian frescoes.

[284] Illustration 5.7. Jean Charlot, mural cartoon of Selestino Koloaia, Jean Charlot Collection. Photo Caroline Klarr.

[285] Zohmah Charlot, Letter of correspondence to Carl Wright, 10 October 1962. Fiji File, Jean Charlot Collection.

[286] Illustration 5.8. Portrait of Petero Mataca, example of Jean Charlot’s graphing technique, Fiji sketchbooks, Jean Charlot Collection. Photo Caroline Klarr.

[287] Illustration 5.9. Pencil sketch study for Fijian (left) panel, *Black Christ and Worshipers* triptych, Fiji sketchbooks, Jean Charlot Collection. Photo Caroline Klarr.

[288] Franz Wasner, Letters of correspondence to Jean Charlot, 7 February 1961 and 27 June 1962. Fiji File, Jean Charlot Collection.

[289] Zohmah Charlot, Letter of correspondence to Carl Wright, 10 October 1962. Fiji File, Jean Charlot Collection.

[290] Jean Charlot, Diary 1962. Jean Charlot Collection.

[291] Illustration 5.10. Pencil sketch study for Indo-Fijian (right) panel, *Black Christ and Worshipers* triptych, Fiji sketchbooks, Jean Charlot Collection. Photo Caroline Klarr.

[292] Zohmah Charlot, Letter of correspondence to Carl Wright, 20 November 1962. Fiji File, Jean Charlot Collection.

[293] Illustration 5.11. Franz Glinserer mixing mortar, St. Francis Xavier Catholic Mission, Naiserelagi, Fiji. Courtesy of Jean Charlot Collection.

[294] Zohmah Charlot, Letter correspondence to Carl Wright, 10 October 1962. Fiji File, Jean Charlot Collection.

[295] Ratuwaisea Nagonelevu, Interview 11, by Caroline Klarr.

[296] Ibid.

[297] Jean Charlot, Dairy, 16 December 1962. Jean Charlot Collection.

[298] Jean Charlot, Dairy, 16-22 December 1962. Jean Charlot Collection.

[299] Illustration 5.12. Detail of *trompe l’oeil* from *St. Joseph's Workshop*, Jean Charlot, fresco, altar panel, east transept, 1962-63, St. Francis Xavier’s Catholic Church. Photo Caroline Klarr, June 2001.

[300] Caroline Klarr, visual observation of differences, confirmed by Martin Charlot, during restoration. Martin Charlot, conversation with author, June-July 2001, Naiserelagi village, Ra District, Fiji.

[301] Zohmah Charlot, Diary, February 1977, Jean Charlot Collection. In the entry, she mentions *The Annunciation* only; however, the Charlots were accompanied by Weetie Watson, who recalled that Charlot repaired damage to *St. Joseph’s Workshop*. Damage had been caused by use of the indigenous whisk broom or *sasa*. Valda "Weetie" Watson, Interview 18, by Caroline Klarr, 20 September 1999, Nadi, Fiji.

[302] Martin Charlot, Interview 4, by Caroline Klarr.

[303] Jean Charlot, Diary, 12 December 1962. Jean Charlot Collection.

[304] Jean Charlot, Diary, 13 December 1962. Jean Charlot Collection.

[305] Based on information obtained during my own research in Fiji and from primary source documents including Charlot diaries, letters, and newspaper articles.

[306] “Remarkable Mural by Jean Charlot,” Fiji Times, 17 December 1962. Fiji File, Jean Charlot Collection.

[307] Zohmah Charlot, Letter of correspondence to John Charlot, 16 December 1962. Private collection of John P. Charlot.

[308] On December 5 Charlot's diary entry reads, “sketch Celestino ‘meke’ (memory).” Jean Charlot, Diary, 5 December 1962, Jean Charlot Collection. There are many types of *meke*, and the Charlots witnessed more than one type that evening. As a general rule, *meke* are classified as formal music (versus informal music, *sere*), which focuses on social structures implied in chieftainships, place, and pre-contact religion. Formal occasions that include *meke* are rites of passages, exchanges of goods, and rituals for visitors. Typically, *meke* include sung narrative texts with systematized movements and instrumental accompaniments. Adrienne L. Kaeppler and J. W. Love, editors. The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, Volume 9: Australia and the Pacific Islands (London: Garland Publishing, 1998), 780-781.

[309] Selestino Koloaia, Interview 7, by Caroline Klarr, 4 October 2000, Rokuvuaka, Fiji.

[310] Illustration 3.2. Fiji *War Dance*, Jean Charlot, 1971, color linoleum cut. (Morse, Figure 636, 364). Photo Jana Jandrokovic. Collection of Caroline Klarr.

[311] Zohmah Charlot, Letter of correspondence to John Charlot, 20 October 1962. Private collection of John P. Charlot.

[312] Please refer to Illustrations 5.2 and 5.3. According to John P. Charlot it was Monsignor Wasner’s original idea to do the side frescoes and he subsequently mentioned it to Zohmah, who asked the artist to oblige. John P. Charlot, interview 3, by Caroline Klarr, April 2000, Honolulu, Hawai’i.

[313] Zohmah Charlot, Letter of correspondence to John Charlot, 20 October 1962. Private collection of John P. Charlot.

[314] Jean Charlot, Diary, 13 December 1962. Jean Charlot Collection.

[315] Illustration 5.13. Photo reproduction of Jean Charlot’s Christmas card to Zohmah 1962. Charlot Family Albums, January 1962-January 1963, “Weddings,” “Fiji,” Jean Charlot Collection.

[316] Liturgy of the Advent Wreath: “The second candle reminds us of the message that the angel Gabriel brought to the Virgin Mary (St. Luke 1:26-31).

[317] Jean Charlot, Diary, 19 December 1962. Jean Charlot Collection.

[318] Jean Charlot, Diary, 23 December 1962. Jean Charlot Collection.

[319] Jean Charlot, Diary, 28 December 1962. Jean Charlot Collection.

[320] Jean Charlot, Diary, 31 December 1962. Jean Charlot Collection.

[321] Ibid.

[322] Jean Charlot, Diary, 2 January 1963. Jean Charlot Collection.

[323] Jean Charlot, Diary, 4 January 1963. Jean Charlot Collection.

Illustration 5.1. *Black Christ and Worshipers*, Jean Charlot, fresco, triptych altar panel, St. Francis Xavier's Catholic Church, Naiserelagi, Fiji. Photo Jesse Ulrick, September 2002. Collection of Caroline Klarr.

Illustration 5.2. *St. Joseph's Workshop*, Jean Charlot, fresco, 1962-63, altar panel, east transept, St. Francis Xavier's Catholic Church, Naiserelagi, Fiji. Photo Jesse Ulrick, September 2002. Collection of Caroline Klarr.

Illustration 5.3. *The Annunciation*, Jean Charlot, fresco, 1962-63, altar panel, west transept, St. Francis Xavier's Catholic Church, Naiserelagi, Fiji. Photo Jesse Ulrick, September 2002. Collection of Caroline Klarr.

Illustration 5.4. Jean Charlot working on *Black Christ*, 1962, Naiserelagi, Fiji. Original photo Martin Charlot. Courtesy of Jean Charlot Collection, University of Hawai'i-Manoa, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

Illustration 5.5. Exterior of St. Francis Xavier's Catholic Church, Naiserelagi, Fiji. Photo Caroline Klarr, July 2001.

Illustration 5.6. *The Compassionate Christ*, Jean Charlot, fresco, 1958, altar panel, St. Catherine's Catholic Church, Kapa'a, Kaua'i, Hawai'i. Courtesy of Jean Charlot Collection, University of Hawai'i-Manoa.

Illustration 5.7. Jean Charlot, mural cartoon of Selestino Koloaia, Jean Charlot Collection. Photo Caroline Klarr.

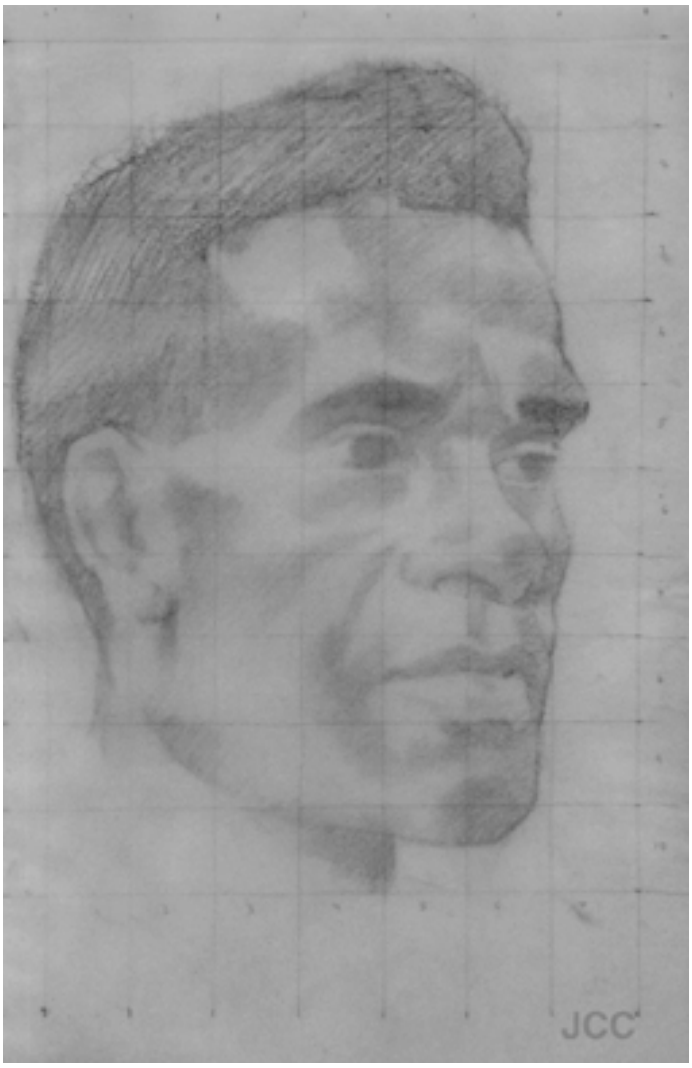

Illustration 5.8. Portrait of Petero Mataca, example of Jean Charlot's graphing technique, Fiji sketchbooks, Jean Charlot Collection. Photo Caroline Klarr.

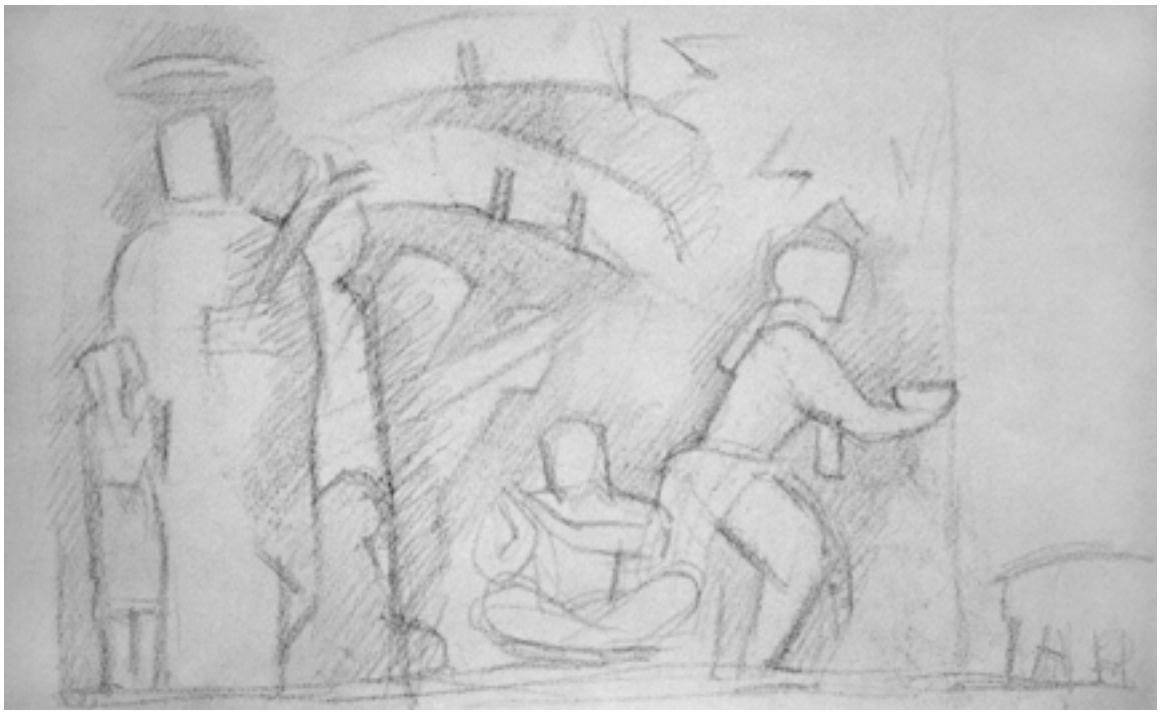

Illustration 5.9. Pencil sketch study for Fijian (left) panel, *Black Christ and Worshipers* triptych, Fiji sketchbooks, Jean Charlot Collection. Photo Caroline Klarr.

Illustration 5.10. Pencil sketch study for Indo-Fijian (right) panel, *Black Christ and Worshipers* triptych, Fiji sketchbooks, Jean Charlot Collection. Photo Caroline Klarr.

Illustration 5.11. Franz Glinserer mixing mortar, St. Francis Xavier Catholic Mission, Naiserelagi, Fiji. Courtesy of Jean Charlot Collection, University of Hawai'i-Manoa, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

Illustration 5.12. Detail of *trompe l'oeil* from *St. Joseph's Workshop*, Jean Charlot, fresco, altar panel, east transept, St. Francis Xavier's Catholic Church, Naiserelagi, Fiji. Photo Caroline Klarr, June 2001.

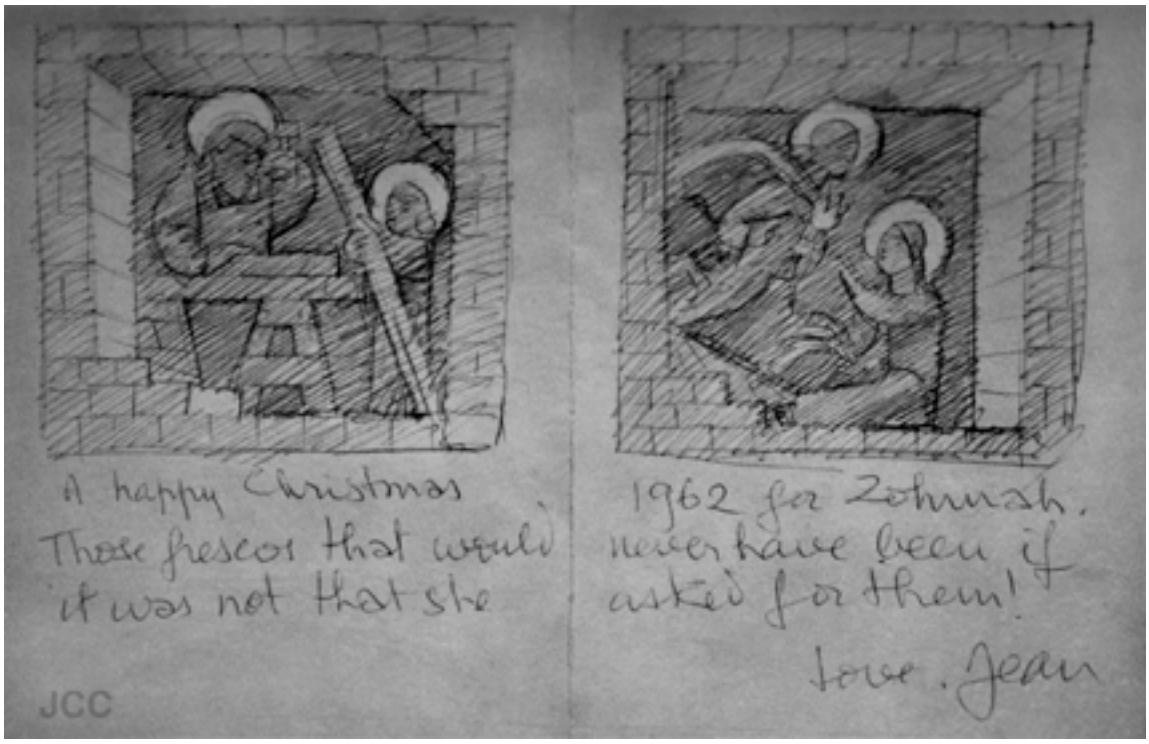

Illustration 5.13. Photo reproduction of Jean Charlot's Christmas card to Zohmah 1962. Charlot Family Albums, January 1962-January 1963, "Weddings," "Fiji," Jean Charlot Collection, University of Hawai'i-Manoa, Honolulu, Hawai'i.