

FEMINISM, SOCIALISM, AND PRAGMATISM IN THE LIFE OF MARCET
HALDEMAN-JULIUS, 1887-1941

By

C2008
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Submitted to the American Studies Program and Faculty of the Graduate School of
the University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an important intellectual, political, and cultural biography of Marcet Haldeman-Julius. Marcet's life demonstrates the important intersections between class, gender, politics, and individual agency that unfolded against a backdrop of fascinating historical characters, including her aunt Jane Addams, her husband Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, the largest publisher in the world, W.E.B. Du Bois, and John Dewey. In this thesis, I trace her early life including her parents' relationship and her family's tense relation with Jane Addams and the family's relationship with *The Appeal to Reason*, the large socialist newspaper published out of their town. Marcet's marriage draws her into the milieu of American socialism but also into the difficult terrain of gendered subordination. I document Marcet's emergence out of marital strife and into the public sphere, a sphere she helps create with her own feminist writing, writing that helps to excel the Haldeman-Juliuses to the position of the world's largest private publishing company. Then, I account for Marcet's relationship with Jane Addams and her unique inheritance, from both Addams and John Dewey, of a particular feminist pragmatism, a pragmatism that she further complicates and makes her own. Lastly, I offer a specific example of Marcet's application of her liberal feminist and pragmatist ethics in her fight for racial equality at the University of Kansas. Marcet's life is complicated because she doesn't situate herself as a passive observer and does not accept ideological doctrines (feminism, pragmatism, socialism, etc.) in their entirety. Instead she makes them her own, and applies her own felt commitments to real life social problems, from her own marriage to labor to the struggles of African American students in Kansas's universities.

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Preface

There is an old metaphor that epistemologists use to talk about the truth that involves an elephant, a dark room, and some flashlights. No one flashlight can illuminate the entire elephant. The premise behind the metaphor is that truth never offers itself fully to any one seeker. I find this readily apparent when writing biography, certainly the most demanding “genre” I have ever attempted to write in before, particularly because there have not been any other biographies done on this particular subject. When that is the case, the biographer must search for scraps: letters, photos, writings, newspaper articles, etc., and piece them together into a life story that is coherent.

What must a life story cohere to? Some might say a life story must cling to a developmental arc, others, a central theme. Easily done, right? Wrong. Lives are messy, and except for being constrained in time, they often spill out of biographers’ categories. Most people don’t live according to categories or feel comfortable positioning themselves overtly within larger social or political movements. Rather, their own internal senses of development and meaning guide them much more readily than the external factors that biographers look to. Often these meanings and motives are unknowable, and the responsible biographer must know when to temper or qualify his guesses or when not to guess at all.

The metaphor of the elephant and the flashlights applies both to the content and the form of this thesis. I have focused on diverse but interrelated aspects of Marcet Haldeman-Julius’s life, different trajectories articulated by her love of justice and her belief in the fundamental equality of all beings, different trajectories that are colored by her varying levels of agency and her own situational access to power.

Though any biographical work uses a variety of sources, researching Marcet Haldeman-Julius's life was particularly challenging because no formal biographical work had been done on her before. This thesis, however problematic it is, is a product of almost four years of intense work and thought.

I used three types of source material: biographical work on her husband Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, substantial personal archival sources (letters, financial documents, grocery lists, etc.), and her own published material. A good deal of work has been done on her husband, Emanuel, because he was such a notable public persona in the first half of the twentieth century, and I was able to scavenge some detail about Marcet's life from these studies. Using this body of work as a touchstone, however, was often problematic because it tended to skew Marcet by privileging her husband's perspective and voice. This stance, muted by his biographers, focused on her feminine appearance, gentility, and submissive qualities – all of which, I argue, are inaccurate and sexist renderings. Other secondary sources focused on Jane Addams or on the history of Girard or socialism in Kansas. I was aided by Elliot Shore's biography of J.A. Wayland, as it laid some important foundations for my understanding of Marcet's context. I was also given terrific advice and encouragement by my committee chair and professor Bill Tuttle, in American Studies, as well as by Ann Schofield, and committee members Maryemma Graham (who helped me understand better the methods and responsibilities of writing biography) and Brian Donovan, whose work on white slavery in Chicago and whose many good insights in conversation helped me as I crept along my path. My discovery of Marcet occurred in Bill Tuttle's American Studies 804 class, and the project has benefited from his input, off and on, to this, its final instantiation.

The majority of sources I employ in this work are primary sources. I was very lucky that Marcet and Emanuel have had much of their correspondence donated or sold to archives across the country, and there was a wealth of information there from which to draw. This proved to be particularly important since both Haldeman-Julius children passed away decades ago. An important part of my research was made possible by fellowship from the Lilly Library at Indiana to work in their archives which house a great deal of Marcet's personal letters and the letters of her family, including Emanuel, Henry, Jane Addams, Sarah Alice, Alice, and many other friends and relatives. I also worked in the DeLoach Collection at the University of Illinois at Chicago, the Special Collections at Kansas State University, and the Haldeman-Julius Collection at Pittsburg State University, where Randy Roberts and his staff were most helpful.

My last major source of information were Marcet's own published writings. Published between 1924 and 1936, a short expanse of time, these writings demonstrated Marcet's skill in writing fiction, drama, journalism, polemic, and nonfiction. Her output does not compare in size to that of her husband, who was prolific, but her work sensitized thousands of readers to the plight of laborers, blacks, children, and women. Marcet covered the Scopes trial, the Tom Mooney trial, the lives of women in Stalin's Russia, among many other topics. It was her work on Jane Addams, though, that first brought her to my attention.

I feel I must explain briefly what led me to Marcet Haldeman-Julius, since she has such an oblique relationship with American history. After working for years on American pragmatism, I extended my knowledge of classical American philosophy to include women pragmatists because there was a distinct lack of female voices in the

history of the discourse. My original question was “Who were the women influential in the first generations of American pragmatism?” Of course, this question brought me to Jane Addams, who influenced John Dewey’s version of instrumentalist pragmatism, placing her, in my opinion, at the very front lines of the pragmatism movement. Works by Mary Jo Deegan and Charlene Haddock Seigfried corroborated my belief that Addams was significant to the pragmatist movement. A trip to the Spencer Research Library here at KU led me to a small blue book entitled *Jane Addams as I Knew Her* written by a woman I’d never heard of before. Marcet was that woman.

There were a number of striking things about this little blue book. The first was that it was written by the niece of Jane Addams and published in 1936, the year of Addams’s death. I expected a saccharine idol-worship tract on Addams’s stunning social significance. Remembering the fact that Addams had co-won the Nobel Prize (1931) just a few years prior to its publication, I was shocked that this author raised some interesting critiques of Addams’s work at Hull House, critiques that demonstrated an exceptional personal knowledge of Addams and a reluctance to paint her in the saintly image that dominated the American media in the 1930s (as if they were asking for forgiveness for their ostracization of Addams for her pacifist leanings during the first World War). These critiques were embedded in accurate stories about Addams told with respect, but they were sharp nonetheless. I began to wonder what lay behind Marcet’s critiques. Who was this woman who seemed able to critique the great Jane Addams? From what did she draw her insightful observations or the confidence to level them? What were her motives?

These questions spurred my interest in Marcet and drove much of my original research into her life. Little did I know that so much of weight of these critiques came from the fact that Marcet grew up in the shadow of her famous aunt.

Chapter 1 of this thesis traces the origins of socialism in Girard, Marcet's early family life including her relation with her parents and with Jane Addams, and her meeting of Emanuel Julius. Chapter 2 identifies her transition from a wealthy Republican woman in a small Kansas town to a radical socialist/feminist author, struggling to covertly bring the topic of gender oppression to her female readership. The focus of this chapter is Marcet's marriage to Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, for whom she buys the *Appeal to Reason*, allowing him the capital to climb to the top of the socialist publishing industry in the United States in the process. Emanuel and Marcet's publishing company became the largest private press in the world.

Emanuel's climb to the top, though, was fraught with all sorts of intellectual, emotional, and familial complications for Marcet, who had to run the household on very little money and tried to live everyday with dignity despite her husband's extramarital affairs. Marcet's only ability to make an income for her family came in the form of writing books and articles for her husband, and she was saved, in a sense by that writing. Chapter 2 also documents Marcet's rise to a public persona and her successful attempts to battle, through her writing, the private gender domination she suffered at home. Her move into the public sphere was facilitated, at first, by Emanuel's desire for her to answer his (often amorous) fan mail, and through this dialogue with Emanuel's largely female readership, Marcet created a public out of an audience, turning her attention to issues of explicit gender domination and inviting her readers' outrage and action.

Chapter 3 deals with Marcet as a social philosopher of sorts operating in the pragmatist tradition, and it attempts to answer some of my original questions about the origins of Marcet's philosophical attitudes. I argue that Marcet demonstrated three essential philosophical dispositions: feminism, socialism, and pragmatism, but that like her aunt, she did not practice her philosophy from within the traditional parameters of the academy, preferring instead to take it to the public. This chapter focuses on her moments of philosophical communion with Addams and the points at which she broke from Addams's unique style of American pragmatism.

Chapter 4 focuses on a particular application of Marcet's enthusiasm for ameliorating social inequalities. Here, the racial context in which Marcet came to adulthood in Kansas and the ties between the Ku Klux Klan and organized labor are analyzed. In this section of Chapter 4, I articulate how Kansas Governor Henry Allen used the alibi of eliminating the Klan from Kansas to eliminate the chances for organized labor to change things in the coal or railroad industries.

In the third section of Chapter 4, I demonstrate how an organ of the KKK called the *Independent* attacked the Haldeman-Julius's and how their critiques often left Marcet painted as an innocent victim. Rather than responding to the incitements of the editors of the *Independent*, Marcet turned to an important story. Inspired by an article by former KU student Loren Miller in the NAACP's journal, the *Crisis*, edited by W.E.B. Du Bois, and she decided to start investigating racism at the University of Kansas. Marcet completed an amazing study of all the colleges in Kansas and determined that KU was among the worst offenders. Notably, she enlisted Du Bois and James Weldon Johnson to help her find facts and take on, in print, the University of Kansas's racist administration.

Marcet Haldeman-Julius has been lost to history, and my efforts here serve to invoke her work and her insight, her right to be remembered. She did not win a Nobel Prize like her aunt or set publishing records like her husband, but Marcet Haldeman-Julius did something that not many Kansas women had done before: she negotiated the public sphere and took numerous chances to change the world for the better, whether it be advocating for the wives and children of miners in Southeast Kansas, empowering women readers who suffer under the dominating hands of their husbands or fathers, or working on behalf of black students at an institution that stood as a beacon of hope and instead fell to the depths of injustice. Marcet Haldeman-Julius is not important because of awards received. Moreover, there is no great ceremony with which to end this piece, no great recognition bestowed. She died a lonely woman, deserted by her husband, taken by cancer in 1941. At the time of her death, she owned an equal amount of stock in her own company as her husband's mistress, a mistress he would marry soon after Marcet's demise.

Chapter 1

Early Life

Looking at Girard, Kansas in 2008 one sees nothing unexpected for a small, rural town in the Southeast corner of a sparsely populated state. Though it is the county seat for Crawford County, Girard's population, as per the 2000 census, rests at a meager 2773 people. Girard's courthouse sits proudly yet awkwardly in the middle of the town square, amid streets filled with empty shops and the occasional half-functioning diner or bookstore. Summer finds the remaining residents indoors, giving the town a deserted feeling. According to John Egerton's historical retrospective of the town in *The Progressive*, Girard, Kansas, consisting of "a square-mile checkerboard of dusty streets in the southeast corner of Kansas, look[s] like a deserted movie set of a Midwestern town."¹

There is very little evidence to suggest that this small town was one of the few original tributaries of the large and turbulent river of American radicalism at the end of the nineteenth century, playing host and sometimes home to such distinguished radicals as Mother Jones, who was often caught speechifying from atop the limestone courthouse steps, and Eugene Debs, who launched his third unsuccessful presidential campaign on the socialist ticket there in 1908, and other socialist luminaries such as Jack London, Hellen Keller, Upton Sinclair, Kate O'Hare, and Clarence Darrow. Girard, Kansas, for all its banal appearances, has a very unusual history.

The history of this town, at least until the last few years of the nineteenth century, was similar to the towns around it. Until then, Girard was republican, agricultural, and religious. Though the dynamics of agricultural dominance had begun to change in 1883

with the first generation of European immigrants arrived to fill the employment void in the emergent coal and zinc mining industries, turn of the century Girard was homogeneous. Republican farmers dominated local politics, and the miners and their families kept a low profile in local events, living out of town a few miles in camps attached to their mines.

Socialism insinuated itself into Girard through one man, Julius Wayland. Wayland arrived in Girard in 1896, a real estate developer who had made some money in Colorado and had come to the conclusion that he needed to start a socialist newspaper. After trying and failing to begin a newspaper in a few other small towns, Wayland moved his printing operation to Girard because it had ready access to a railroad, which would aid in distribution. Wayland was not an orthodox socialist, rather he was a self-educated socialist who refused to ascribe to what he considered any ideas that were too dogmatic. Wayland took responsibility for his own socialism and called it his “One Hoss Philosophy.” This orientation toward a general rather than an orthodox socialism attracted a large readership for Wayland, as its appeals to populist ideals of Midwestern readers worked well to cross boundaries theretofore left untouched by advocates of socialism.

Wayland brought not only his socialist ideas but his somewhat successful socialist newspaper, *The Appeal to Reason*, with him. Wayland capitalized on the residents’ populist distrust of large corporations and belief in the importance and ethos of the workingman to insinuate his socialist message into the community, and it didn’t take long until Girard’s populist past gave way to more radical socialist leanings. Wayland’s

¹¹ John Egerton. “When ‘Reason’ Reigned in Kansas,” in *The Progressive* 52 (1988): 30.

version of socialism stripped the doctrine of abstractions and appealed to the dignity of workers. By 1902, Wayland's little socialist paper had attained a circulation of 150,000 copies, elevating it to the position of the fourth most widely circulated weekly in the country. In 1905, Wayland invited the little-known socialist writer Upton Sinclair to write a serialized piece on the meat packing industry in Chicago, a piece that became *The Jungle*, and vaulted the small socialist paper into the public's attention. Doubleday went on to republish Sinclair's book – much to Wayland's chagrin – and it was translated into 17 languages, becoming an instant best seller. Julius Wayland, the “one hoss” philosopher, had read socialist tracts and considered himself a socialist, but he also never shied away from making a profit. In fact, it was his decision to limit Sinclair's compensation and ability to republish *The Jungle* that sent the then-famous author to Doubleday in the first place. Wayland continued to struggle with the paradox of publicly espousing socialism and desiring to turn greater and greater profits. In fact, not long after, he became the first socialist publisher to have the dubious distinction of watching his employees strike against him for fair wages.

By 1912, sixteen years after his arrival in Girard, Wayland's paper had grown successful and he had established himself as the wealthiest man in Girard, but his popularity had brought with it the threat of scandal as well. Federal authorities in Kansas indicted members of *The Appeal's* editorial staff and later Wayland on the charge that the paper sent obscenities through the mail, a claim that would by the next year prove unsubstantial but nonetheless would tax Wayland finances. Wayland's constant battles with Comstockery eventually exhausted his emotional resources. That same year, his beloved second wife, Pearl, was thrown from the couple's motor car while turning a

corner near their home and killed. Having lost his first wife to cancer, Wayland took Pearl's death very hard. As a method for recuperating his strength, Wayland went to work putting together a system of media support for Debs's run in the 1912 presidential election. Though Debs received over one million votes in 1912, more than any other socialist candidate in history, his defeat was imminent, as even the reform candidate, the Bull Moose Teddy Roosevelt, could not gain enough support to topple the appeal of Wilson's Democratic Party. Elliot Shore recalls Roosevelt's notion that *The Appeal* was a "vituperative organ of pornography, anarchy and bloodshed" and he urged the federal postal authorities to prosecute Wayland.²

Distraught about the election and its surrounding circumstances, Wayland climbed the steps to his bedroom on the second floor of his beautiful Girard house and shot himself in the head, ending his life. He did, however, leave an "epitaph ... tucked into a book on his bedside table [which read]: 'The struggle under the competitive system is not worth the effort; let it pass.'"³ "At the time of his death he was under indictment for another alleged postal violation, and additional federal indictments were rumored."⁴

The Appeal was placed in the hands of Wayland's three sons, none of which had newspaper experience and one of whom was interested in the everyday workings of the paper. The Wayland boys brought in Louis Koepelin, an editor of the *New York Call*, and in 1915, Koepelin brought in Emanuel Julius, a friend of his from the *Call*'s editorial staff. Emanuel Julius had a stunning resume for a young journalist with an eighth grade

² Elliot Shore. *Talkin' Socialism: J.A. Wayland and the Radical Press* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1988), 18.

³ Shore, *Talkin' Socialism*, 217.

⁴ Shore, *Talkin' Socialism*, 29.

education, having worked at the *New York Call* with John Reed (one of the very few Americans ever buried in the Kremlin), at Victor Berger's *Milwaukee Leader* (Berger was the man that helped turn Eugene Debs to socialism by bringing him a copy of Marx's *Das Kapital* while in prison after the Pullman Strike of 1894), with Karl Sandburg at the *World* in Chicago, at the *Los Angeles Citizen*, and at the *California Social Democrat*. For Julius, the move to the country meant a higher salary, more time to work on other writing projects, and the ability to work at the biggest socialist paper in the world.

While walking downtown one day with his friend Koepelin, Julius noticed who he thought to be a rather attractive young woman walking on the other side of the street and questioned his friend as to who she was. According to Dale Herder, Koepelin informed Julius that this young woman, Marcet Haldeman, was the town rich girl.⁵ On hearing this, Emanuel replied that she might be a good candidate for a wife.⁶ “[E]ight months later ... Emanuel Julius ... married the town rich girl. He married her and her background of culture, social prestige, and patrician comfort.”⁷

Marcet Haldeman-Julius had much more going for her than just her money. Born in Girard June 18, 1887, nine years before J.A. Wayland made his way to Girard to transform it into a socialist Mecca, Marcet lived a unique life from an early age. The only child of Harry Haldeman and Alice (Addams) Haldeman, Marcet was born into a family fraught with complications enough to match their substantial wealth. Alice was the daughter of Illinois state senator and miller John Addams and sister to the

⁵ Dale Herder, “Education for the Masses: the Haldeman-Julius Little Blue Books as Popular Culture During the Nineteen Twenties” (Ph.D. diss, Michigan State, 1975), 17.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

internationally known reformer Jane Addams who began her endeavor at Hull House on Chicago's busy Halstead Street just two years after Marcet's birth.

Losing his first wife to pregnancy complications at a young age, John Addams married Anna Haldeman, the widow of a former competitor of his in the milling business from the nearby town of Freeport, Illinois. Unlike his first wife, Sarah, who was known as a hearty, unassuming woman, Anna Haldeman was flamboyant, artistic, musical, and most of all, temperamental. Anna Haldeman Addams was known throughout her community in Cedarville, Illinois to vacillate between grand gestures of kindness and black periods of vehement anger, a personality trait that kept those around her, except for her aloof husband, in a constant state of anxiety. As with most second marriages, it was children who suffered the brunt of this anxiety.

Anna Haldeman brought children of her own to her marriage to John Addams: a young son named George, about the same age as Jane, Addams's youngest daughter, and an older son named Harry, whose age corresponded to John's middle daughter, Alice. Jane and Henry became fast friends, and Harry Haldeman, Anna's middle son, became infatuated with Alice, sending her passionate love letters on the sly. Of course, neither of the parents were comfortable with the idea of their children falling in love, let alone marrying, not because they were stepbrother and stepsister, but instead because Anna Haldeman did not see Alice as equal to the worth of her talented, though complicated, middle son. The two siblings continued their correspondence well into Harry's first pursuit of a medical education, which failed due to the emergence of his alcoholism, an issue that would plague the family for the remainder his life. It was only after John's death that the siblings were wed, Alice's influence serving as a stabilizing force for Harry

and helping him to facilitate and finish his medical education. Harry and Alice wound up settling in Girard, Kansas, where Harry became the town doctor, the president of the local bank, and the owner of many of the mortgages in the area.⁸

Though Anna gave preference to her biological children, Jane, as the youngest daughter, served her most and became a close and important companion to her after her second husband's death. Harry's alcoholism and Alice's constant need to nurture him through his problems created a rift between Harry and his mother as well as Harry and his soon-to-be famous stepsister Jane. As Victoria Bissell Brown explains, this constant conflict began to take a toll on Jane's health:

She shared Anna's disdain for Harry's drinking, and Harry's drinking was at the center of the family's tension. For many years ... Anna refused to visit Harry and Alice's home and habitually included in her letters to them desperate preachments on the evils of drink. Little wonder Jane collapsed in Philadelphia under the strain of family service and medical studies; she was caught between an older sister loyal to an alcoholic husband and the husband's teetotaling mother, who was also the sister's stepmother ... Harry's thinking did not include the possibility that Jane would be anything but the maiden aunt in her siblings' homes answering to the family claim.⁹

Jane Addams had different plans, though. Fresh out of an empowering experience at Rockford seminary, where she had led the student body while not cowering to the headmistress's paternal Christianity, and had been offered the institution's first Baccalaureate degree ever, Jane Addams was much affected by her return to the family at Cedarville and their weighty expectations. The abrupt transition caused her much physical harm, suffering, as she was anyway, from pain caused by a curved spine. Much

⁸ Victoria Bissell Brown. *The Education of Jane Addams* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 118-119.

⁹ Brown, *Education*, 119-120.

later, for reasons unknown and rather confusing, Harry Haldeman offered his estranged stepsister corrective back surgery, which she took. Her time in convalescence at Harry and Alice's home helped to mend the fissures between the two. Harry, though, would throughout his daughter Marcet's life, belittle Addams's reform projects, despite and perhaps because of the constant praise heaped upon Addams by his wife and daughter.

Jane Addams's problematic familial relationships did not end there. Through her Hull House endeavor, Addams became increasingly at odds with her stepmother, who refused to offer any financial assistance to what she saw as a selfish philanthropic endeavor that took Jane away from fulfilling her role as Anna's personal caregiver and, later, George's wife.¹⁰ Anna became adamant about her wishes that Jane would return home and enter into matrimony with her son, who, after suffering health problems while on a scientific trip in Europe, had moved home and had become addicted to opium.¹¹

As a member of the first generation of women to attend college, Addams and her female cohort experienced the elevated hopes of women's status offered by their colleges and suffered the imminent emotional fall when the great promises of education left them with social graces, knowledge of the classics, and no real opportunities – beyond the

¹⁰ “[W]hen *Twenty Years at Hull House* appeared in the following year (1910), it contained only the barest, incidental mention of the woman who had put so much movement and richness of thought into Jane Addams' life from her eighth year onward. When I asked Aunt Jane if it were not true that grandmother had been a constructive force in her life – in some ways, even more than had my grandfather – she answered “Yes” but added that it was “all too complicated.” We two were sitting at the moment on the porch of the homestead at Cedarville and I remember yet the little breeze of emotional coolness that blew between us.” Marcet Haldeman-Julius. *Jane Addams as I Knew Her* (Girard: Haldeman-Julius Publishing Company, 1936), 11.

¹¹ Bissell Brown explains: “The sad irony in the family's history is that Anna was unable to enjoy the fact that many of the skills Jane drew upon at Hull House were skills she learned through Anna: how to create a gracious domestic space, entertain, make small talk, play games, enjoy music and drama, even be a bit coy and beguiling when it suited her purpose. Instead, it continually grated on Anna that a daughter who had abandoned her duty to family was publicly praised for being ‘noble’ and for opening the ‘broad doors of her beautiful land spacious home ... like a true woman.’” Bissell Brown, *Education*, 226.

traditional “feminine” careers like teaching – to put their knowledge to use in the real world. The great promise of liberal education closed in on many of these women, many of who suffered deep bouts with depression after the close of their college careers. The closure of opportunity was difficult to take as many of these women believed the conventional wisdom that education quelled the traditional feminine virtues and spoiled women for married life. Over fifty percent of the first generation of college women never married.

Addams was one of the few women whose melancholia produced a path for her to follow. On a second tour of Europe in the years after she left Rockford Seminary, Addams became awe-struck with the a tenement house project called Toynbee Hall erected in London’s East end. Toynbee Hall, founded by Canon Barnett, was a place where the poor could be helped without condescension, a place that, for Addams – fresh out of college and looking for a way to make her knowledge of art and literature useful – “had much of the charm and fellowship of a college dormitory.”¹² Allen Davis explains that it was during this two week tour of London “that Jane Addams made the decision to live in a working class neighborhood in Chicago,” though “her decision had deep roots” in her love of Tolstoy and Ruskin¹³, her friendship with her Ellen Starr, a friend she had met at Rockford, and “her haunting sense of frustration and uselessness as she acquired

¹² Allen F. Davis. *American Heroine: The Life and Legend of Jane Addams*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 51.

¹³ John Ruskin’s work advocating a return to the handiwork and away from factory manufacture and especially his emphasis on the importance of training in art and literature for the working man played a huge role in Jane Addams’s initial vision of Hull House as a place that was less interested in political reform and place more interested in elevating, through the teaching of the great works of literature, art, music, and culture in general, the minds of the working class immigrants with whom she would come into contact. Hull House’s turn toward political reform did not consolidate until the arrival of Florence Kelley.

more and more knowledge about art and history and culture.”¹⁴ Jane’s vision of a place like Toynbee Hall in the United States was as much directed at, as Ellen Starr articulates, “the benefit of the people who do it than for the other class.”¹⁵ Addams saw a place where the poor were educated by well meaning, college educated women, who had only family life, teaching, or a life of longing as the only alternative outlets for their many talents. As Addams discovered on her trip to London, helping people gave her energy, while living a life full of social demands and quaint pleasantries, a life her socialite stepmother Anna Haldeman Addams wanted for her, wore her into sickness. It was in some part to save herself that Jane Addams started Hull House.

Desiring to offer her daughter escape from the doldrums of southeast Kansas and participation in her aunt’s growing project in Chicago, Alice began the practice of sending Marcet, her only child, to spend summers with her famous aunt in Chicago. Despite Harry’s near-constant criticisms of Addams’s activity at Hull House, Alice recognized the fact that Addams’s work there encompassed the cutting edge of female power at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁶ Jealous as her sister was inclined to be, Jane Addams was doing something revolutionary in Chicago, something that would influence her niece. Marcet would later recall:

Coming from a little Kansas town, I was thus given a yearly plunge into a different world: the socially significant work of Hull House and the noisy “international” life of Halstead street that swept past its doors. It was

¹⁴ Davis, *American Heroine*, 50.

¹⁵ Davis, *American Heroine*, 56.

¹⁶ Marcet explains: “Frankly, too, my father had a type of mind and a view of life that conflicted with Aunt Jane’s. He regarded her work as sentimental and futile. Silent, so far as I can remember, on social questions, he was radical and picturesque in his unconventional expressions of opinion on other subjects; an Athiest and cynic, he was unsympathetic with the fundamental optimism of Aunt Jane’s character and viewpoint ... It was quite easy for him and aunt Jane to be impatient with each other.” Marcet Haldeman-Julius, *Addams*, 6.

here, to mention an incident by no means trivial, that I first saw a cultivated colored person – a Negro woman – associating on terms of equality with white people. Her name escapes me, but she was a physician and one of the residents. Later I saw W.E.B. DuBois received with the honors that even Hull House reserved for personages. Although there had been no racial prejudice whatever in my own home, these contacts first revealed to me the higher possibilities of the Negro race: taught me that not only were they people, but that they could be important people.¹⁷

Hull House opened Marcet up to what seemed a different world, a world filled with social action where people of every stratum of social, economic, gendered, or economic life interacted together toward the cause of reform. Marcet recalls that she met “a continual procession of interesting persons – then and on my many other visits to Hull House [including p]rofessor John Dewey, then conducting his educational experiments in Chicago, and his cordial, interesting wife” as well as numerous other famous social reformers, all of whom acted without pomp, and who went cordially and coolly toward their collective goals.¹⁸ It is during this moment of recognition that people could become important by altering the world for the better that began, for Marcet, the difficult transition from bourgeois midwestern daughter to radical reformer.

Though her family was wealthy, Marcet’s life was not one of extravagance, but due to her familial obligations she was brought up in “the center of business, professional, and cultural life of the community.”¹⁹

After spending her girlhood summers with her aunt at Hull House and her undergraduate education at Bryn Mawr College, Marcet auditioned and was accepted in

¹⁷ Haldeman-Julius, *Addams*, 7.

¹⁸ Haldeman-Julius, *Addams*, 8.

¹⁹ Andrew Neilson Cothran, “The Little Blue Book Man and the Great American Parade: A Biography of Emanuel Haldeman-Julius” (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1966), 49.

the American Academy of Dramatic arts.²⁰ She took classes from a number of leading theater educators, including Cecil B. DeMille, who was known to the student body to be moody, cold, and often cutting with his criticism. Marcet's experience dealing in circles of intelligentsia came in handy when dealing with her sarcastic teacher. In one episode she related to her mother, Marcet recalled one particular day when "DeMille lost his temper."²¹

When we got through [practicing the scene] and were having five minutes intermission, I took my courage in my hands and strolled up to Mr. DeMille. "I want to tell you something – I am absolutely stale on this scene. I can't get a new idea out of it just now – and I know it's the same way with the rest of us. Can't we take something else for a couple of weeks and then come back to this – fresh?"

"What do you want to take? With fine sarcasm on this face.

"Anything different."

He glowered at me for a few minutes – meanwhile I got ready for the words in gentle fashion, "Tend to your own business," but instead, he quite smiled – "Do you know Miss Haldeman, I believe you are right – we will take a piece of Ibsen. We have gone stale on this – all of us!"²²

Though nervous and still quite young, Marcet demonstrated early and often that institutional and gendered power was only as real as its victims made it. Her courage warmed her to DeMille, and in 1910, the year of her graduation from the Academy, Marcet signed a contract with him that took her throughout the United States and Canada acting in stock companies in Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, Newark, Montreal, and St. Louis, among others.

Marcet's love of the theater waned, and her letters home changed from thrilling encounters with audience members, standing ovations, and flowers passed over the floor

²⁰ Bryn Mawr was a hotbed for feminist activity during Marcet's years there, and it helped to consolidate her own germinal feminist positions.

lights, to tiredness, boredom, irritation with the pettiness of her fellow actors and actresses, and her constant inability make ends meet. Near the end of her time in New York, Marcet expressed humiliation that despite her successes she could not afford to buy herself the requisite costumes for the new theatrical season (as players in stock companies often had to supply their own clothes). In a letter dated September 6, 1913, Marcet wrote to her family back in Girard that she “suddenly collapsed” and has “lost more weight.”²³ Her sadness, in this letter, is palpable.

I got dressed, lunched, and went downtown [to look for a new part]. But I might as well have spared myself the effort for there is no use in looking for a job unless you put your heart into it [Eventually,] I got into my old stride of doing the offices. But not quite. I still felt as if the whole thing were an endless game. Scarcely worth the candle. But I did my best.

At home again in the late afternoon I wanted like everything to write on my story but I had sworn [it] off for several days and I like to be able to keep faith with myself. So I picked out an interesting book of [William J.] Locke’s called “Stella Maris” [sic] Presently I came to this passage: “For perhaps the first time in his pleasant life he was overwhelmed ... by the sense of futility of his work, which every artist, actor, painter, and poet is doomed to feel at times. The painted faces of his colleagues, the vain canvas of the set, the stereotyped words, gestures, inflections, the whole elaborate make-believe of life that at once is and is not the theatre, - all this oppressed him and filled him with shame and disgust. It had no meaning. It was an idle show. He had give to inanity a life that might have been devoted to the pursuit of noble ideals.”

A simpler[,] better photograph of my own state of mind would have been impossible. And suddenly I realized, how much we all run to type. How little any of us, [sic] really have to say about ourselves ... I have accomplished so little.²⁴

²¹ Marcet to “Dearest Mother,” 10 Feb. 1909, S.A. Haldeman Mss. Collection, Lilly Library, Box 3, Folder February 1-12, 1909.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Marcet to “My Precious Family,” 6 Sept. 1913, S.A. Haldeman Mss. Collection, Lilly Library, Box 5, Folder January to April, 1915. This letter was clearly misfiled and should have appeared in an earlier Box.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

After touring for three years, Marcet returned to Girard and took over her mother's position at the bank on hearing that her mother suffered from a serious illness.²⁵ Now in her early twenties, Marcet was able to face her community with a new set of social sensitivities, skills, and experience. Developmentally, Marcet and Jane Addams seem plagued by the same feeling, a feeling that I believe is cross-sectioned by both women's gender and class; each woman seemed to be reacting against the notion that "*she was not expected to do anything.*"²⁶ The notion that "with all her education and her cultivation, she was not held to any responsibility" was too much for Addams and later Marcet to abide.²⁷

Determined as she was to effect change in Girard, loneliness seemed an insatiable enemy for the urbane young woman who felt like she could only talk to "anyone here" about "fluffy subjects ... Whenever I say what I really think about anything real [the local women] look puzzled or shocked."²⁸ The specter of loneliness and isolation was, however, suddenly vanquished by the October 1915 arrival of Emanuel Julius. Marcet wrote to Addams,

[b]een having such a thrilling and absorbing friendship with Emanuel Julius, a brilliant Russian Jew (just my age) ... Julius's studio was on the floor below mine at the Benedict [in New York] but we never met (though we have lots of mutual friends and acquaintances) until we came out here to the prairie!²⁹

Marcet had returned to Girard a worldly woman on receiving the news of her mother's imminent death. When she returned, her mother offered Marcet an interesting

²⁵ Cothran, "The Little Blue Book Man and the Great American Parade," 50.

²⁶ James Weber Linn, *Jane Addams: A Biography*. (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1935), 73.

²⁷ Linn, *Jane Addams*, 73.

²⁸ Marcet to "Geliebte Grossmutter," 28 July, 1915. S.A. Haldeman Mss. Collection, Lilly Library, Box 1, Folder, Biographical and Genealogical Information.

bargain to stay and take over the family run State Bank of Girard. If she stayed for a year or longer, Marcet stood to inherit money, assets, and property (in the form of mortgages all over Crawford County and the beautiful estate where Jane Addams was raised in Cedarville, Illinois) valued at well over \$150,000. As writer and critic Alexander Woollcott explained the arrangement in a 1925 Haldeman-Julius retrospective in the *New Yorker*:

A wise and gracious lady was Mrs. Haldeman, less celebrated in the outside world than her sister, Jane Addams of Hull House, but not less highly regarded in Girard. It is possible that she had small confidence in her daughter's career as an actress: it is certain she had great patience with it. To Marcet she willed the Haldeman fortune, with no stipulations dictated by the inordinate vanity of the dead. She left it all to her daughter with a single condition. Marcet was to enter into her inheritance only after she had dwelt for a whole year in Girard. If, thereafter, she preferred New York and the hard benches of the managers' waiting rooms, it would at least not be because she did not really know how pleasant life could be in Girard, especially if one lived in its finest house and in the Spring twilight could motor out along the new roads and look at all the newly planted fields on which she held the mortgages.³⁰

Marcet stayed. Marcet and Emanuel were married the following year and went about setting up the separate professional spheres of their lives.

At the outset, Marcet was not comfortable with the idea of marrying Julius, though she found him and his passionate socialism entertaining. Despite her difficulties with the local church populations, Marcet was situating herself in 1916 to begin climbing the rungs of the political ladder in the state, and her marriage to a socialist seemed to her a bad idea on this front. Marcet believed that with her monetary resources, an expansive intellectual palate that included knowledge of the region, and proclivity toward “social”

²⁹ Marcet to Jane Addams. November 11, 1915. DeLoach Collection, Folder 172.

³⁰ Alexander Woollcott. “After June 30, the Deluge,” *New Yorker*, June 20, 1925, 7-8.

work, she might have a chance to do something political on the state level. She wrote to her aunt,

Suddenly it came to me that if I should not marry Julius [a public and avowed Socialist] and wished to, that I could become a big woman politically in this state. It's the truth, Aunt Jane, and I do know it. But I doubt if, when I do marry Julius I can hold my own altogether. People here are not educated up to thinking of a husband and a wife as separate entities.³¹

But she did marry him, after a three-week courtship in which Julius traveled to Chicago to introduce himself to Addams and gain her approval.

The marriage began on terms the young republican feminist felt comfortable with: Marcet and Emanuel, now the Haldeman-Juliuses (the two had hyphenated at Jane Addams's request), decided to keep their money separate and manage their own incomes.

Soon, Emanuel began taking on more and more responsibilities at the *Appeal* and Marcet squaring herself to demonstrate that married life would not diminish her effectiveness as the Vice President of the State Bank of Girard and secretary of the Kansas State Bankers' Association. In a letter to the members of the association, Marcet, wary of the belief that a woman could not have a career and be married, wrote,

It may surprise you to learn that I plan to be married. While the announcement was being made, I felt that many of my associates might be concerned over the future of the work of this office. Let me assure you that I am of the positive conviction that my duties will not be neglected in any way.³²

When she returned to Girard, Marcet went about serving the Girard mining community, using models she had learned from her work at Hull House. Marcet created,

³¹ Marcet to Jane Addams, March 11, 1916. DeLoach Collection, Folder 172.

funded, and led youth organizations, taught the children of miners to read and discuss literature, to write and perform plays, and dance together (as opposed to drinking or gambling – two popular past-times with the community teenagers). For these “radical behaviors” the conservative Kansas community deemed her a suspicious character. In fact, as she describes to Jane Addams in a 1916 letter, she discovered that she had been the topic of a few of the local minister’s admonitions on Sunday mornings. The local preacher told his congregants that this wealthy daughter of Girard, this upstart who reached across the bridge of social and ethnic separation to join hands with the children of foreign miners, was “tearing down the Church of Christ.”³³ In response to this, Marcet gathered the community together and made a public speech in her defense. She recalled, “It did me good to stand up before that crowd – I mean the Girard people – lots of whom have been ripping me up and down behind my back and tell them a few plain truths.”³⁴

In 1916, Marcet was young, wealthy, single, and recently transplanted back to her native Kansas, and she put her resources and free time to use, documenting much of her work in the community for her aunt Jane. Patterning these organizations on Hull House, Marcet related their success to her aunt. There is no matter, she writes, so

entirely my own as my camp work. The seven acres cost me \$600 and I expect to have the boys do most of the work on the [baseball] diamond and running track themselves. Children always like a thing better if they make it themselves, and besides it keeps them out of mischief if they have work in the earth. The younger girls club has been going for longer than three weeks. [I spoke of them] in the Presbyterian church [and] at the Crawford County Teachers Convention. I made a talk first [and] then had one of the little girls do the exercises I give them ...[Later,] I had them

³² Marcet to C.A. Hale, May 20, 1916. Cothran, “The Little Blue Book Man and the Great American Parade,” 58.

³³ Marcet to Jane Addams, March 11, 1916. DeLoach Collection, Folder 172.

³⁴ Marcet to Jane Addams, March 11, 1916. DeLoach Collection, Folder 172.

dance barefoot ... The people were crazy about it ... [They were beginning] to understand what I was trying to do.³⁵

³⁵ Marcet to Jane Addams, April 1916, DeLoach Collection, Folder 172.

Chapter 2

Marriage, Effacement, and the Public Sphere

“It wasn’t the kind of marriage of which she had always dreamed. She realized that she was capable of profound devotion, of responding with her whole being to a deep love. But was it probable that this love would ever come? ... [What held him to her] was an elemental materialism, difficult to understand, but it was a language very clear to [her husband]. [After all, he was] not looking for happiness but merely for more of the physical comforts.” – Marcet and Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, *Dust*

The public and private “are existential categories, not social descriptions. They are different contexts for personhood.” – Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*

1. Introduction, Public Sphere

Since Gutenberg, the public sphere has arisen in conversation with itself about the relation of the inner worlds of family and fraternity and outer worlds of political economy. Of those adventurous souls writing and publishing in the first third of the Twentieth Century who chose to challenge the Victorian separation of the personal and the public, the intimate and the social, few women voices have been recorded. Out of the few women voices from that era, almost none spoke from the middle of the country, the plains.

Jurgen Habermas explained the public sphere as a place “between civil society and the state in which critical public discussion of matters of general interest was institutionally guaranteed” and which “took shape in the specific historical circumstances of a developing market economy.”¹ What has interested feminists is that women have been denied the obligatory institutional sanction that would provide for true access to public discussions and economic equality. Feminist historians have challenged the idea

¹Jurgen Habermas. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), xiii.

that the public and private spheres of existence are incompatible in their logics and morals because the former notion belies a patriarchal power structure of private and public oppressions.²

It benefits men to keep the public and private spheres separate, though they are, in actuality, not separate at all. The separation of the public and the private undervalues women and denies the access. The private becomes a prison. As Katherine MacKinnon argues,

For women, the measure of intimacy has been the measure of the oppression. This is why feminism has seen the personal as the political. The private is the public for those for whom the personal is the political. In this sense, there is no private, either normatively or empirically.³

Of course, “personal is political” is a fundament of second-wave feminism and is not new, but the notion can be a useful tool in elucidating the struggles of women who worked to emancipate themselves from the strictures of private life well before the second wave. For women like this, the task before them was to negotiate an escape from the private, to forge the pathways toward public access that feminists in the second wave would take for granted. For women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, marriage often denied access to public agency.

Habermas was keen enough to highlight the importance of money as an example of this connection. Family space kept within its secret hierarchical relations.

Although there may have been a desire to perceive the sphere of the family circle as independent, as cut off from all connection with society, and as the domain of pure humanity, it was, of course, dependent on the sphere of labor and of commodity exchange – even this consciousness of

²Susan Gal. “A semiotics of the public/private distinction” in *Differences – A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 13 (2002): 77.

³Michael Warner. *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2005), 33.

independence can be understood as flowing from the factual dependency of that reclusive domain upon the ... market.⁴

Though Habermas's dependence on Marxism is apparent, his reliance on economic factors is helpful to this feminist history. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century women's lack of access to family money reiterates the notion that many theorists of the public sphere understand as a simple truth: in the public and private spheres "love and money are often intertwined" and can serve to complicate paths to public autonomy for women.⁵ Habermas argues that the family is a "sphere of pseudoprivacy," and that

the shrinking of the private sphere into the inner areas of a conjugal family largely relieved of function and weakened in authority – the quiet bliss of homeyness – provided only the illusion of a perfectly private personal sphere.⁶

The illusion of this personal sphere depends upon the continued policing and enforcing of gendered hierarchies. In reality, though, the private domestic world is a space full of public contentions, especially when the family in question happens to own, run, and write for the world's largest publishing house.

Why discuss the public or private spheres at all if indeed they are coequal and one does not have normative superiority over another? Susan Gal argues that the public/private distinction is a discursive phenomenon, more than anything, an analytic tool "used to characterized, organize, and contrast virtually any kind of social fact: spaces, institutions, bodies, groups, interactions, relations."⁷ Like many women of her generation, Marcet Haldeman-Julius's life was a sophisticated if not convoluted social

⁴ Habermas, *Public Sphere*, 46.

⁵ Gal, "A semiotics of the public/private distinction," 1.

⁶ Habermas, *Public Sphere*, 159.

⁷ Gal, "A semiotics of the public/private distinction," 6.

fact, her history a complicated cloth of private allegiances and public responsibilities. This chapter traces her trajectory out of a marital prison and into the public sphere.

In 1916, the Haldeman-Juliuses ran across the opportunity to purchase a one-third share in the *Appeal to Reason* after Julius Wayland's 1912 suicide had placed the business in the hands of his three sons. One of them, John, had gotten into serious debt in the mine industry and unloaded his shares of stock on Louis Koepelin, a fellow editor at the *Appeal*, Walter Wayland (Julius's other son), and Marcet and Emanuel. "Walter became President, Louis Vice-President, Manuel, Secretary-Treasurer. Manuel also became managing editor."⁸ The couple bought their share of Wayland's company with \$30,000 that came from Marcet's properties. She donated \$25,000 to the endeavor while Emanuel took out a \$5,000 note. Both Marcet and Emanuel's names were, however, on the bill of sale. Marcet explains,

[I]t is very nice to have the two interests [the bank and the newly acquired paper], though I find myself in a very perplexing position. Manuel was determined I should be one of the directors and here I am, a good Republican, planning and working for the success of the largest and most powerful Socialist paper in the U.S.A., the largest and one of the most powerful in the world I guess When the board meets, and when Louis and Manuel and I discuss things, I seem to quit being myself and see things altogether as Manuel's wife. *For the time being* I accept his point of view and see everything from that point of view. I can drop it again as easily as I used to drop a part. *Just what effect it is going to have on my character, I can't say.*⁹

Emanuel did not reward Marcet's flexibility. Instead, he used her ability to change roles for his own benefit, allowing himself more and more to take over their finances and control of the publishing enterprise. Eventually, Marcet spent less and less time "being myself" and more and more time being "Manuel's wife," a tenuous position indeed, one

⁸ Marcet to Jane Addams. No date. DeLoach Collection., folder 172

⁹ *Ibid.*

in which the folds of private gender subordination and superordination extend to the public roles Marcet was and was not allowed to play.

Soon they began printing the *Haldeman-Julius Weekly* and the Little Blue Books. By Emanuel's death in 1951, he and his wife had produced over 500,000,000 volumes of over 6,000 titles. These Little Blue Books, what Marcet and her husband considered to be the "new democracy" would reach the South Pole with Admiral Richard Byrd, Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie, and even the moon in the hands of Colonel Frank Borman.¹⁰ Both Marcet and Emanuel thought the Little Blue Books were "a way of promoting individual freedom and human happiness by exposing ignorance and intolerance" for what they were: power.¹¹ They saw it as their professional task to identify and eradicate "bunk," that pulp substance within which people are made intolerant and forgo thoughtful choice. Theirs was a program developed straight out of the Enlightenment, Emanuel touting himself the new Voltaire.

2. Writing

Though she became an accomplished author and journalist, Marcet met the world, first, as a woman. Newspaper articles focus on Marcet's appearance, her "womanliness," rather than her accomplishments. An April 18, 1916 article in the *Topeka State Journal* that focused on Marcet's community service in Girard appeared under the sexist title, "Pretty and Rich."¹² A male interviewer for the *Rockford Morning Star* described her as

A sparkling, kindly person whose friendly manner and sympathetic charm immediately make the stranger feel at home, Mrs. Haldeman-Julius is short of stature and brunette of complexion with large and expressive brown eyes. Her hair is dark brown, and she wears it in a tiny knot at her

¹⁰ Mark Scott. "The Little Blue Books in the War on Bigotry and Bunk" in *Kansas History* 1 (1978): 155.

¹¹ Scott. "The Little Blue Books," 155-156.

¹²"Pretty and Rich." *Topeka State Journal*, April 18, 1916.

neck. *She is ultra-feminine in appearance*, and it's easy to imagine her in her earlier role of actress, for in spite of the sociological research and serious writing she's done, there's nothing of the blue-stocking in her appearance.¹³

It is impossible to miss the allusions to Marcet's appearance, her femininity, the vivid descriptions of her looks. The interviewer sounds almost as if he is describing a work of art, still, an object to be sold, as though Marcet's theater experience offers implicit permission for her to be rendered something to be studied from a distance. Marcet's public pose is captured here by her rapt interlocutor; she is disarming, feminine, demure: interesting but not threatening to male readers. Half hidden in the shadows of convention, draped in the garb of traditional femininity, Marcet appeared innocuous. The one thing that made her different, though, is that she, as the editor's wife and as a writer herself, had access to the public sphere.

One of her first jobs was writing a column entitled "What the Editor's Wife is Thinking About" for the *Haldeman-Julius Weekly* (formerly the *Appeal to Reason*). At the beginning of Marcet's foray into the public sphere, her column consisted of her answering (female) readers' questions about her husband. By now, Emanuel was a celebrity, and most of these women wrote to Emanuel asking him about his personal life. Never one to miss an opportunity but considering himself far too busy to address these questions himself, he put his wife to the task of answering these letters.

Marcet's readers only learned that, as per the day to day activities of the Haldeman-Julius marriage, "[o]ur household is organized around and about him, his wishes, and his comfort" only.¹⁴ She explains, "Emanuel is interested primarily not in

¹³ "Marcet Haldeman-Julius." *Rockford Morning Star*, August 20, 1931.

¹⁴ Marcet Hadleman-Julius. *What the Editor's Wife is Thinking About* (Girard: Haldeman-Julius Publications, 1924), 55.

people (either individually or collectively) but in ideas for their own sake.”¹⁵ Marcet had a vague feeling in Marcet’s stomach that her husband is growing disinterested, and this can be seen in her constant equivocations on his behalf. “Altogether I find him one of the most thoughtless, but most consolingly lovable, most exasperatingly egocentric, but most pride-stirringly efficient of men.”¹⁶ Though she explains that she and Emanuel share a “full partnership,” she also admits that “he has the most appalling, total lack of imagination when it is a matter of a concrete individual in distress” and no interest in helping those who might need it.¹⁷ She paints the picture of an individual so immersed in ideas that he not only neglects but loathes the pedantry of every day life, demanding it shape itself around his whims. Almost forlorn, Marcet explains to her eager readers that “[j]ust as surely as Emanuel’s heart warms to the working man and his problems, just as surely does it harden to the . . . man or *woman* with a long tale of woe.”¹⁸

What Marcet does not let on to her audience is that she speaks from experience. As I will discuss more in subsequent chapters, as early as 1924, Marcet became aware of Emanuel’s propensity for trysts with other women, one of which developed over years into a lasting and rather public affair. In 1925 Marcet and Emanuel “consolidated” their assets. This was one last attempt by Marcet to hold together two people slipping apart, an attempt made in the materialist language that Emanuel understood so well. Marcet tried to call her husband away from his mistress with the elemental materialism that he understood so well. Marcet gave Emanuel all her money, stock, and property: \$57,000 worth of U.S. Liberty Bonds, \$46,375 worth of stock in the State Bank of Girard,

¹⁵ Haldeman-Julius, *Editor’s Wife*, 14.

¹⁶ Haldeman-Julius, *Editor’s Wife*, 15.

¹⁷ Haldeman-Julius, *Editor’s Wife*, 27, 50.

¹⁸ Haldeman-Julius, *Editor’s Wife*, 27, 51. Emphasis added.

\$10,900 of stock in the New Appeal Publishing Company, and the written lease agreement on the Addams's family farm in Cedarville, Illinois in exchange for a modest allowance of \$100 per week from Emanuel, money she needed for household expenses.¹⁹ This exchange made Emanuel the sole benefactor of the Haldeman estate and gave Emanuel complete control over its assets.

This last ditch ploy to save her marriage failed, however, as Emanuel's control over the family's assets made him even more thoughtless in his treatment of Marcet. Sometimes forgetting and often refusing to pay her "allowance," Emanuel's tightfistedness gave Marcet only one option for survival: she had to write for him to make money. Consequently, 1925 to 1937 are Marcet's most productive years of work. Her marital position catalyzed a burning desire in her to act out and speak out about women's issues, about marriage and contraception issues, issues that brought Marcet to the fore of the debate about reproductive technology and women's health. After Emanuel's refusal to pay her weekly allowance, Marcet eventually took him to court, filing for separation and attempting to slap Emanuel with a restraining order demanding he make plain all his financial dealings and disallowing him from selling assets. The transcript reads:

That the defendant has been guilty of extreme cruelty towards plaintiff in this, to-wit: That defendant many times, when plaintiff needed funds with which to meet household and necessary expenses, and has requested and asked said defendant for funds, with which to defray said expenses, and although defendant was well supplied with money and funds, yet said defendant, for the purpose of being vexatious toward plaintiff and to discommode her, unduly and arbitrarily kept her waiting for long periods of time That the defendant has lavishly lost, spent and squandered a large part of his wealth, property and assets in connection with gambling on the markets and boards of trade, and said defendant possesses a gambling and speculative state of mind ... all with the view and intent of squandering and concealing his wealth, property and assets The

¹⁹ Transcripts of the District Court of Crawford, County Kansas. Haldeman-Julius Collection Box 2, Folder 5.

defendant has stated to plaintiff That defendant has stated to plaintiff, that even if he was rolling in wealth, that he would see to it that he would not carry out the terms and conditions of said written agreement, and . . . that if she thought she could make him keep the terms and conditions of said written agreement to go ahead and sue him.²⁰

On July 2, 1933, Marcet sued Emanuel for the above reasons and to retrieve her \$125,000 dollars in assets with six percent interest. Marcet lost. Although the couple separated, they remained in the same house. Leaving Emanuel would have meant that Marcet would give up access to all her family's properties and assets, some of which, the Cedarville farm at least, had been in the Addams' possession since well before the Civil War.

In her answering readers' letters about Emanuel, Marcet employed a gendered tone. Recognizing that her access to the public sphere had a gendered component, Marcet used dialogue and gossip tropes to introduce her husband's personal life to the public. Not without irony, Marcet was introducing *herself and her oppositional gender politics to the public*. Marcet occupied a traditional gender role *only in order to subvert it and create a space for future opposition*. A typical column would begin with a reader's question written verbatim which was then answered by Marcet. These letters from the *H-J Weekly* were reprinted in Blue Book 804, in which Marcet writes, bating her audience on the notion of gender,

[H]ow the letters have come flowing, catapulting, avalanching in from the ladies! . . . Every kind imaginable, from readable, well-written – extraordinarily well written ones – motivated by feelings of authentic mental or spiritual kinship to just as many mash notes that often include offers of marriage. I am sure Mrs. Rudolph Valentino, Mrs. Ben Hecht and myself – not to mention numerous others – could have quaint sport, should chance throw us together, comparing notes on the eternal feminine as it is portrayed before us in letters to our husbands.²¹

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Haldeman-Julius, *Editor's Wife*, 7.

Marcet's entry into the public sphere was paved by her ingenious use of gendered dialogue/gossip genre, and it also served the purpose of satiating her husband's hungry ego. Marcet wrote "Every time I see him coming with his free easy stride, I feel a little tingle of pleasure all along my nerves and so," she tells her female readership, "I am positive, would you."²²

Marcet continued in her column to answer such questions as "How tall are you and how heavy"; "Are you egotistical and do you have a cocky strut?"; "What kind of voice have you? High or low?"; "Did you ever drink and or would you like a wine dinner? In the old days?"; "What is your politics?"; "Do you belong to any luncheon clubs?"; "Are you agnostic?" It was not until the column had run for a few weeks and Marcet had gotten comfortable with her pen that the answers began to challenge the status quo. Marcet began to send some sharp notes out to see if an audience was there that could carry critical readings of her husband and, perhaps, most, critical readings of gender. It all began with a reader's question about Emanuel and his money. To the question "Are you charitable and how do you display it?" Emanuel's wife, devoid of enough money to run her household and knowing her husband's socialist readership was sympathetic to class issues wrote that

Emanuel is constitutionally averse to people who are 'broke.' He will make almost unbelievable sacrifices for an idea in which he is interested, but he has the most appalling, total lack of imagination when it is a matter of a concrete individual in distress.²³

Having tested the water to a positive response, however, Marcet returned to the apropos, noting in a subsequent letter that Emanuel was "a devoted and tender father" despite, she

²² Haldeman-Julius, *Editor's Wife*, 11.

²³ Haldeman-Julius, *Editor's Wife*, 50.

thought privately, leaving his family table to road-trip with his mistress.²⁴ Marcet's public life had to survive at this level on positive reports about her husband's celebrity. This was her path to the public, and no matter how bitter a pill it was to swallow, Marcet understood that her access to the public meant playing the game, at least for a while. Marcet noticed that Emanuel's editorial position began to slip further away from the socialist notion that, as Mari Jo Buhle puts it, "if the whole vast knowledge and experience of mothers were to be socialized for the good of the entire race, women must be able to exert their wills."²⁵

Marcet's manipulation of gossip and dialogue fostered her entry into the public sphere. That is, it helped her grab the attention of her readers, mostly women, by using discussions of her husband as a pretext. Once this audience was formed, though, Marcet made an effort to consolidate her female readership and push it in a more critical direction. In this move made in essays written between 1926 and 1930, Marcet called into question the differentiation of the public and private, noting the gender hierarchies that prevail in the domestic spaces within their Girard home.

In a 1931 book entitled *Talks with Joseph McCabe and other Confidential Sketches*, Marcet maintained the trope of the "dishing" wife who allows access into "confidential" spaces within her home. This use of gendered stereotypes and primary speech genres allowed Marcet her first access into the public, but this time she played it differently. Released from the duty of having to answer swooning questions about Emanuel, Marcet, whose writing career had taken off by the early 1930s, had some latitude to take a more critical course. Her rise to prominence in the late 1920s and early

²⁴ Haldeman-Julius, *Editor's Wife*, 49.

²⁵ Mari Jo Buhle. *Women in American Socialism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 219.

1930s included taking a trip through Russia to cover the Communist experiment there and writing on numerous important court cases like the Tom Mooney trial and the Scopes trial, invited, as she was, by lead counsel and family friend Clarence Darrow.

In this new case, Marcet played on the trope of the domestic in a more dangerous way, using space as an analogue of the gendered subordination she suffered at the hands of her husband. Still “dishing,” Marcet began by examining, as a palate for understanding the gender differences in her home, the spatial similarities.

EH-J’s library is exactly above my study. The two rooms, which stretch the length of the house on its north side, are practically the same size, and the editor’s fireplace, which like mine, holds crackling four-foot logs all winter, is directly above my own.²⁶

“But there,” she tells her readers, “all similarity ends”:²⁷

Instead of the scuffed, plain brown linoleum that adorns my floor, a beautiful oriental rug, that it took E.H.-J. hours to select in Chicago, receives his august footfalls. Instead of my little portable Victrola to which the children dance ... is the wonderful new combination Orthophonic Victrola and radio. In place of the battered, folding bridge tables on which I write and from which my cherished manuscripts are swept ruthlessly to make way for games ... or the literary inspirations of the juvenile members of the household, a massive, long, carved Old English table, awaits in spotless expectancy to receive on its flat top the editor’s apothegms and sparkling sentences. Instead of my worn typewriter which so many little fingers constantly use, is a darling little Corona which must never, never, no absolutely *never* be touched by anyone by E. Haldeman-Julius himself But the biggest difference of all this: that what is in the editor’s library is his, while what is in my study is everyone’s.²⁸

Though Marcet weaves gender domination through her domestic spaces, she never makes the mistake of breaking the fourth wall – like any good actress; that is, she never rises beyond the tropes of domesticity, gossip, and back-fence dialogue. This is a purposive

²⁶ Marcet Haldeman-Julius. *Talks with Joseph McCabe and Other Confidential Sketches* (Girard: Haldeman-Julius Publishing Company, 1931), 93.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

maneuver, a way to consolidate her ever-growing audience's awareness of gender domination.

Her use of dialogue and gossip tropes is interesting because in almost all of her work before 1935-6, Marcet retained these domestic and gendered forms of speech, despite the fact that her popularity was dramatic, as evidenced in the Haldeman-Julius catalogue. In fact, according to Andrew Neilson Cothran, Emanuel's biographer, "if the truth can be told ... she became one of [Emanuel's] most popular authors – *far outshining the master himself* – even in the eyes of many confirmed Haldeman-Julius fans."²⁹

Marcet's use of gendered speech tropes allowed her to move from singing her husband's praises to confronting a nation of readers about the facts of gender domination. Marcet, ever talking over the back fence, reassures her female audience that

It is true that we look out upon the same wide-flung ever-changing scene. But his reaction is an esthetic one, while I use my windows chiefly to note how the work is progressing in the fields; whether or not the chickens are scratching in the vegetable garden; ... what is happening in the poultry yard and pasture; and whether the watering tank is properly full.³⁰

Marcet understood that she had to reclaim her authority, her reason. Marcet, a free thinker, could not slink back into the crevices of a reclusive marital position. She wanted to make known the subtle avenues of gender domination via the "private" domains of personal life, to expose them. She needed the public sphere, a fact to which her initial work in Girard, Kansas attests. Marcet needed to use her reason, but this time she needed to use it on behalf of women. As Habermas puts it, "[r]eason, which through public use of the rational faculty was to be realized in the rational communication of a public ... itself needed to be protected from becoming public because it was a threat to

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Cothran, "The Little Blue Book Man and the Great American Parade," 222.

any and all relations of domination.”³¹ Reason was a tool for women, more powerful than even the ballot. It was a fulcrum, a lever. As Marcet decried in 1927, “It’s time people woke up to these facts – women at least. To men the problem can never be as vital and pressing a one ... as to women.”³²

Although her access to the public sphere offered Marcet not only a grasp on the world around her, but also some sort of agency, her marriage became increasingly strained. In a letter written to her son Henry after an argument with Emanuel, Marcet explained:

[T]his same sort of thing, as you know, has happened before. When things don’t go to suit E.H-J his impulse is to threaten – and especially to threaten to leave. There is never any question of a calm discussion and of meeting a problem in a friendly way. He must issue ultimatums. Do thus and so or else! There was a time when this used to strike terror to my heart and put me in a flurry. Not anymore ... I [no longer] even feel that hatred that is not so far removed from love.³³

For Marcet Haldeman-Julius, the public sphere of her writing became the stage for her to fight the gendered domination she felt at home, and the theme is consistent in her work, going back to the very earliest pieces she wrote. In *Dust*, for instance, written in 1924, Marcet wrote herself what sounds like a warning and a note of prophetic compassion.

Had Rose stood her ground on this matter, undoubtedly all her after life might have been different, but she was of those women whose charm and whose folly lie in their sensitiveness to the moods and contentment of the people most closely associated with them. They can rise above their own discomfort or depression, but they are utterly unable to disregard that of those near them. This gave Martin, who by temperament and habit considered only his own feelings, an incalculable advantage. His was the old supremacy of the selfish over the self-sacrificing, the hard over the tender, the mental over the emotional. Add to this, the fact that with all

³⁰ Haldeman-Julius, *Joseph McCabe*, 93.

³¹ Habermas, *Public Sphere*, 35.

³² Marcet Haldeman-Julius. *Why I Believe in Companionate Marriage* (Girard: Haldeman-Julius Publications, 1927), 31.

³³ Marcet to Henry. June 3, 1939. DeLoach Collection, Folder 200.

his faults, perhaps chiefly because she cooked, washed, ironed, mended, and baked for him, kept his home and planned so continually for his pleasure, Martin was dear to Rose, and it is not difficult to understand how unequal the contest in which she was matched when her wishes clashed with her husband's.³⁴

Marcet Haldeman-Julius's move from gendered subordination to the expressive world of the public sphere represents a real-life example of one woman's attempt to move from the prison of the private into the world. This move depended on Haldeman-Julius's ability to create the conditions for a public in subversive ways using what tools she had at the outset: an audience given her to satisfy her husband's blind ego and the language of gossip. *Marcet then created a public out of an audience*, always printing her readers' letters and making them the fodder of her new material, as if to remind her new readership of the value of keeping lines of dialogue open. The attempt to create publics in which private gendered forms of domination can be exposed may be one of the most heroic of human endeavors. For Thomas Mann as well as for others, hell is, after all, the "absolute *lack of being heard*."³⁵

Marcet Haldeman-Julius's attempts to break into the public sphere are of historical importance because, though she predated the second wave of feminism by three generations, her writing demonstrates a determination kept over many years to make the personal the political, to make her own gendered subordination explicit and relevant to her female readers. Though feminism and feminists existed in the latter part of the nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth century, their public attempts at suffrage were almost always embedded in strong and vocal public grouping in voluntary organizations, communities that amplified the voice of the individual through the

³⁴ Marcet and Emanuel Haldeman-Julius. *Dust* (New York, Brentano's, 1921), 71.

³⁵ Mikhail Bakhtin. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1986), 126.

concerns of the community. Marcet Haldeman-Julius's work is significant because it works in the opposite direction: she helps to create a feminist community by sharing her own experience. She negotiates the domain of marital subordination through exhortations to a public of women who may encounter similar situations. In making the personal political, Marcet Haldeman-Julius also succeeds in making the political personal. Though the story of her marriage, alone, is a somber one, the story of her bold attempts to address and help invoke a public of women conscious of the parameters of their own subordination is exciting when read through its larger instantiation in the second wave. Pioneers, after all, are rarely remembered for their successes. Instead, they are often remembered for their bold attempts at drawing connections, routes of empowerment, over unforgiving terrain.

Chapter 3

Feminist Pragmatism

1. Introduction

In late 1929 Kansas wheat farmers suffered a severe blow as the price of wheat bottomed out at 25 cents a bushel, the price of five ice cream cones, sending reverberations all the way to the roots of rural economic and political life on the plains. This drop was not sudden, though, as Kansas farmers had little to show in profit for their work throughout the twenties, making on average only one-third the per capita income of an average United States citizen throughout the that decade.¹ As the Hawley-Smoot tariff bill was passed with the blessing of President Hoover on June 17, 1930 and cut off the possibility of international sale of U.S. agricultural goods, citizens of Kansas who were thirsty for change searched for a solution. Turning to the typical political venues for relief was not a viable option for true reform as both gubernatorial candidates in the 1931 election clung to strict doctrines of political economy. As I will investigate in more detail in the next chapter, both the Republican and Democratic candidates were, for instance, card-carrying members of the Ku Klux Klan.²

Amid this social and economic depression thrived an almost inexplicable enterprise, pulsating from a small southeast Kansas farm town called Girard, the seat of Crawford County with a population of around 3,000 in 1920. Here, the presses of Marcet and Emanuel Haldeman-Julius turned from churning out thousands of copies of the nation's largest socialist newspaper, *The Appeal to Reason*, to thousands of copies of the newly purchased franchise, *The Haldeman-Julius Weekly*. At the height of its

¹ R. Alton Lee. "Radical Politics in Depression Kansas" in *The Journal of the West* 45 (2002): 6.

² Lee, "Radical Politics," 10.

importance, *The Appeal* was selling 500,000 copies per week. Here, too, they would publish Little Blue Books – condensations of philosophy by Will Durant, socialist tracts by Eugene Debs and Upton Sinclair, books on sex, hygiene, and condensations of numerous historical and philosophical works - for only twenty five, then ten, then five cents a copy. By Emanuel's death in 1951, he and his wife had produced over 500,000,000 volumes of over 6,000 titles, making them the largest publishers in the world.

The coal mining industry brought men and women together throughout the region serving as the epicenter for numerous economic and social concerns. Due to their immigrant status and their occupation as miners, this population favored socialism, making southeast Kansas a radical, if not somewhat unlikely, place to build resistance to the Republican agenda. *The Appeal to Reason*, the community's central socialist voice wanted to "show the need for a revolutionary socialist party," and the terrible conditions under which many of the miners worked provided much momentum for that cause.³ Some, including Eugene Debs, Upton Sinclair, Mother Jones, and Clarence Darrow considered Girard a "shrine" where "one can fairly feel the spirit of that world-wide brotherhood which we call International Socialism."⁴ Indeed, as one local speaker put it, "Some time or other the comrades all come to Girard."⁵ As Elliot Shore articulates, in "this town, the socialist movement found its expression of what life could be like when the Socialist party triumphed," and in its insular popular mind, Girard became "an isolated island separated from the rest of American society," a situation that "both gave

³ Shore, *Talkin' Socialism*, 183.

⁴ Shore, *Talkin' Socialism*, 184.

⁵ *Ibid.*

strength to its socialist inhabitants and weakened their connection with the American mainstream.”⁶

That this socialistic communion crossed gender lines is not surprising. Even women, whose work was domestic, joined in for the cause of their husbands and their comrades. Ann Schofield relays, for instance, the story of a 1921 500-woman march on Pittsburg, Kansas, part of Crawford County and only miles from Girard. The women marched to support their striking husbands against what the community saw as greedy mine owners, and some reports even accused the marching women of bringing violence against those men, local college students, who came to fill the striking workers’ positions. Schofield explains that the politics of the mine workers

connected the public world of work and the private world of domesticity for women Women expressed their collective stake in the community as wives and mothers in family units whose economic viability [remained] threatened [T]he women laid claim to their rights as Americans and defined their concept of femininity ... [in the context] of political and social conflict that existed in southeastern Kansas.⁷

Though she did not join the women marching on that icy December day, Marcet Haldeman-Julius was in the thick of socialist activity in southeastern Kansas as a social commentator, feminist publisher and author, local philanthropist and activist, and wife and mother.⁸ Her unique access to public media allowed Marcet to connect the life of women, children, and men she had known in Girard and elsewhere to national social

⁶ Shore, *Talkin’ Socialism*, 184.

⁷ Ann Schofield. “An ‘Army of Amazons’: The Language of Protest in a Kansas Mining Community, 1921-22” in *American Quarterly* 37 (1985): 687.

⁸ As E.W. Howe put it, unaware of his own sexist reductions, “Mrs. Haldeman-Julius may have Welfare Work in her veins [due to her relation to Jane Addams], but [she] also [has] Housekeeping blood ... Mrs. Haldeman-Julius does not neglect art because of farming and housekeeping. She does her share of the family writing [as well]. Undated text fragment. Mrs. S.A. Haldeman Mss. Collection, Lilly Library. Box1, Folder “Biographical and Genealogical Information.”

movements. Her unique gifts rested in connecting the personal with the political in her own distinct way. According to Nancy Hartsock,

Women's activity as institutionalized has a double aspect – their contribution to subsistence, and their contribution to childrearing. Whether or not all of us do both, women as a sex are institutionally responsible for producing both goods and human beings and all women are forced to become the kinds of people who can do both ... There are a series of boundary challenges inherent in the female physiology – challenges which make it impossible to maintain rigid separation from the object world. Menstruation, coitus, pregnancy, childbirth, lactation – all represent challenges to bodily [and institutional] boundaries [whereas] male experience is characterized by the duality of concrete versus abstract. Material reality as experienced by the boy in the family provides no model, and is unimportant in the attainment of masculinity [which] must be attained by means of opposition to the concrete world of daily life, by escaping from contact with the female world of the household into the masculine world of public life ... There, the concrete/abstract duality takes the form of an opposition of material to ideal, and a denial of the relevance of the material world.⁹

Though it is perhaps a good idea to be wary of Hartsock's attempt to produce a doctrinal feminist historical materialism, there is no doubting that the socialist emphasis on lived experience, on material conditions, and on the body aligns with feminist attempts at deconstructing the dualism rife in the masculine world. Even if one doubts Hartsock's Marxist agenda, one must admit that "feminism's self-acknowledged over-investment in the historical validity of the separation of public and private spheres" is problematic and limiting to the feminist program, and women's bodies and women's work serve as two locations that disassemble simple dualities and hierarchies.¹⁰

Though there have been numerous histories of the Haldeman-Juliuses, all previous accounts have focused almost on Emanuel, and attention to his wife has been

⁹ Nancy Hartsock. "The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism," in *Feminisms* edited by Sandra Kemp and Judith Squires. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 152,153.

almost altogether lacking, because the publishing industry lacked the vocabulary for such a complex woman and because Emanuel Haldeman-Julius was talented at taking credit. Most insidiously, though, it bespeaks a general lack of concern about women's experience in the Midwest immediately after suffrage. In some ways, Marcet's coming of age during and written work after suffrage place her in a bit of a cultural vacuum, a lull when the post franchise role of women was still incipient.

Marcet was a proto-second wave feminist in that she embraced the desire for women and men to share social, educational, intellectual, and bodily freedoms and considered issues of racism as important, situated, and effectuated by cultural misinformation. Freedoms were not intuitive for her, and neither was bigotry; they were learned, and the combination of public action and literature became her medium for enacting a larger project of intellectual and cultural change. Marcet's methods were not fashionable to many of her Kansas peers and were sometimes uncomfortable for but often learned from her aunt, the reformer Jane Addams, a Nobel Laureate, and member of the Chicago School of Pragmatists. Addams and Marcet were close friends with John and Alice Dewey. Dewey, as leader of the Chicago School, was a philosopher and education reformer who built his post-traditional system on a Darwinian, future-oriented philosophy that embodied the acting subject and its environment in an organic, continuous whole. Dewey's, Addams's, and Marcet's philosophical dispositions were context-oriented and melioristic. In different ways, they each searched for fulcrums for change beyond the ability to predicate logical propositions. Pragmatists (and feminists for that matter) did philosophy from within social problems and not from above them. Change, for Dewey

¹⁰ Dana Heller, "Housebreaking History: Feminism's Troubled Romance with the Domestic Sphere," in *Feminism Beside Itself*. (New York: Routledge, 1995), 219.

and his followers was as political as it was intellectual. Learning was at least as social as it was cerebral. This he adapted to the classroom as well as to the traditional dualisms systemic in modern philosophy, logic, art, and history, always citing Addams and his time in Chicago as influential in his personal development and the development of American philosophy. Marcet, who spent each summer of her childhood at Hull House and who knew the Deweys during their time in Chicago and then New York, followed in step with pragmatism's programs. Though Marcet's contact with the Dewey's was limited in Chicago, it picked up on the couple's move to New York. In a letter to her mother, Marcet recalls that "Aunt Jane and I went to the Deweys' for dinner," and she found "the household ... a very cordial, simple-hearted, big-souled one, and I had an awfully good time."¹¹ After dinner, Marcet and Alice Dewey walked Addams back to the train station, and, as Marcet recalled, Alice said "Now, I'm not going to lose track of you ... We must see a great deal of you."¹²

As her aunt had demonstrated before her, Marcet believed that pragmatic methods and concepts were useful outside the institutional parameters in which they were constructed, and hers was a unique blend of the first wave of pragmatism with the first whispers of the second wave of feminism, a movement that will only take on a center of gravity on the continent only after the Second World War. This chapter traces Marcet's intellectual development as it moves through three distinct phases: from the local concerns of women and youth in southeastern Kansas, to the national concerns centering on women's political economy, and to the universal concern of the *authority* of women.

¹¹ Marcet to "Dearest Mother," 7 Dec. 1908, S.A. Haldeman Mss. Collection, Lilly Library, Box 2, Folder December 1-15, 1908.

¹² *Ibid.*

By marrying and working in the public sphere, Marcet attempted to do something that even her famous aunt had not: she attempted to carry on a marriage and be a professional, to interact within both of domains of the separate spheres of the public and private. She set about dissolving a dualism that had trapped Jane Addams. Her desire to accomplish such a compelling goal demonstrates an evolution in thought from her major influence, Addams. In her 1936 Blue Book entitled *Jane Addams as I Knew Her*, Marcet recalled that in Jane's childhood, she and her stepbrother George were close companions and fell in love. When the pair reached marriageable age, George proposed the idea and Jane rejected him, not because she didn't love him but because she believed that a woman could not marry and have a career. Indeed, she "felt closer to him than to anyone else after the death of her father," but the marriage never occurred and George suffered, quitting his job as a researcher, battling the ill health, moving back home from Johns Hopkins, and dying an invalid at age 48.¹³ Addams, according to Marcet, "decided that she wanted a career rather than marriage."¹⁴

Watching the steady decline of her brilliant son, Sarah Addams, Jane's stepmother and Marcet's grandmother, blamed his continuing ill health on Jane. This created a lasting rift between Jane and her stepmother, precluding Jane from taking extended visits to her family home in Cedarville, Illinois. Sarah, on her part, held the grudge between them until her death, refusing to donate any of her plentiful financial resources to Hull House. Perhaps regretting her choice with George, regretting her gullibility for falling prey to the sexist caprice of custom that suggested a woman must not be a professional and a wife, Jane later suggested to Marcet that she consider

¹³ Haldeman-Julius, *Jane Addams*, 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

possibilities other than changing her name to her husband's. In a letter to Marcet the year of their marriage, Addams suggested the "possibility of Julius and yourself taking the name of Haldeman for your married name or Julius Haldeman," adding that the law does not demand a wife take her husband's name, only "custom."¹⁵ Having succumbed to "custom" herself in her relation to George, seeing marriage and career as mutually exclusive, it is possible that Jane's suggestion demonstrates her sincere desire for Marcet not to be bound by custom's tendentiousness.

Though Addams is her major philosophical influence, Marcet's relationship with her aunt was complicated, extending well back to her annual summer trips to Hull House in her girlhood. Feeling the familial ambivalence of Addams's strained relationship with her grandmother and the close and relationship between Jane and her sister Sarah, Marcet's mother, Marcet did not approach her aunt with an uncritical eye, even while most of America did. Despite the fact that Marcet's mother was "personally loyal at all times to Aunt Jane ... shared her ideals, approved of her methods and was proud of her achievements," Marcet thought her aunt to be, at times, "hard and cruel."¹⁶ It is out of this ambivalence of feeling, this mix of due respect and mistrust that Marcet's earliest formulations of what would become her own complex philosophy would emerge. Marcet saw her aunt as a woman who sacrificed her own feelings for effectiveness in the public sphere.

While it is true that Jane Addams created a lexicon for a type of pragmatic feminism that extended well beyond her community at Hull House, Marcet was not satisfied with its passive acceptance. In fact, at times, Marcet felt as though Addams was

¹⁵ Jane Addams to Marcet, April 15, 1916. DeLoach Collection, Folder 170.

¹⁶ Haldeman-Julius, *Jane Addams*, 6.

choosing her Hull House project over her family, her own niece, and privileging institutions over people. This feeling was, of course, exacerbated by the death of Sarah Alice, the major connection between the two women. After the death of her mother, her aunt “made no effort to correct my impression” that she was hard, cold, and distant.¹⁷ Even her work at Hull House, by itself, left something to be desired for Marcet, whose delicate sensitivities to nuance and people’s feelings had developed amid the growth of this burgeoning immigrant community. Marcet, according to her friend John Gunn¹⁸, was led by the “peculiar fineness of her nature ... to embrace with a tense yet fluid eagerness the beauty, the passion, the struggle, the pain and joy of life,” and there was something about the famous institution that left Marcet cold.¹⁹

As much as Hull House stood as a gateway to American life for its many and varied immigrant inhabitants, it also stood as a gateway to conscientious adulthood for Marcet. “Coming,” she explains, “from a little Kansas town, I was thus given a yearly plunge into a different world: the socially significant work of Hull House and the noisy ‘international’ life of Halstead street that swept past its doors.”²⁰ As she grew, Marcet became responsible for taking groups of children to the local park, and she was struck by the harsh fact that it was, for many of the children, the first time they had seen grass. She was saddened, but at the same time her appreciation grew for the wide-open spaces and expansive sky of her home state. Still a young girl, the experience “aroused a formless, inarticulate sense of injustice that so many should be cheated of these simple

¹⁷ Haldeman-Julius, *Jane Addams*, 6.

¹⁸ There is ample evidence to suggest that Marcet and John Gunn, an employee of the Haldeman-Julius Publishing Company, carried on a longstanding love affair. John Gunn was also a close friend of Emanuel, writing the Emanuel’s biography in Little Blue Book form.

¹⁹ John Gunn. “Marcet.” February 15, 1941. DeLoach Collection, Folder 170.

²⁰ Haldeman-Julius, *Jane Addams*, 7.

enjoyments,” and it “intensified my own love of the natural beauties that were so accessible to me in Kansas.”²¹ In addition, she met members of the national and international intelligentsia including W.E.B. DuBois and numerous members of the new Chicago School of American philosophy. Marcet became witness to regular visits from the staff of University of Chicago’s philosophy department, and she witnessed the significant mutual influence between Addams and the Chicago pragmatists.

As her visits continued every summer through her childhood and into her young adulthood and even later into her collegiate experience at Rockford Seminary (the same institution at which Jane Addams was educated) and Bryn Mawr, Marcet developed a strong though tentative respect for her aunt’s ingenious and helpful institution. Indeed, she realized that “Hull House ... and Jane Addams herself as a person ... were increasingly symbols of wider ideals, extending far beyond the boundaries of Chicago;” they were national, indeed, international in scope, and Addams’s work there had helped her to facilitate her work in other arenas, such as the women’s rights movement, both at home and abroad.²²

As Marcet’s visits continued her respect for her aunt continued to grow, but her own analytic ability and sensitivity grew as well. Her experiences at Hull House hatched an uneasy awareness that lingered in Marcet’s mind. This incipient awareness matured into an idea of what was perhaps Jane Addams’s most significant shortcoming at Hull House: the institution grew so much and so well that its original focus, people, often got subsumed under the quest for more growth. At Hull House there were

[i]nteresting activities, interesting people, interesting revelations – yet mingled with them was mingled a bit of groping criticism. When I visited

²¹ Haldeman-Julius, *Jane Addams*, 7.

²² *Ibid.*

my earlier playmates, with whom I had kept up friendship, I found that their living conditions were unaltered. As Hull House had grown, with all its usefulness, its buildings had displaced the old and unsightly landmarks of the neighborhood; but, while some of the tenements of the poor were pushed a little farther away, they remained essentially the same [T]here was a basic ... crowdedness and sordidness ... [a basic] unchangingness of poverty.²³

Marcet's tentative respect for institutions like Hull House was combined with a deep sense of lurking doubt regarding their long-term effectiveness. Looking out of Hull House's tall, narrow windows over a period of years, Marcet saw the surrounding physical geography of the city change, but the internal dynamics of her immigrant friends' lives stayed stubbornly static. She imagined a different sort of medium to effect change, but still her vision was diffuse and far off, waiting to be realized. It was a vision that she, despite changing personal contexts and significant obstacles, would struggle never to forget. Marcet's conscience was coined in Addams's currency, a currency that measured value by effectiveness. As her body was born to Jane's sister, her mind was born to Jane; Marcet Haldeman was born a pragmatist, but a pragmatist of a different stripe than her aunt, a pragmatist whose primary sensitivity lay not in institution building but in the building up of individual lives, the response to individual and social needs. Marcet was an intuitive pragmatist, not a structural one, and she gave "to life with that glorious excess that is found only among geniuses and lovers," believing in the "liberty of all people, regardless of color, creed, or sex [and believing] that women had the right to an independent existence."²⁴ Marcet's feminist/pragmatist tendencies began to develop as she simultaneously becomes a published and powerful writer and a mother.

²³ Haldeman-Julius, *Jane Addams*, 7.

²⁴ John Gunn. "Marcet." February 15, 1941. DeLoach Collection, Folder 170. Mark Scott. "The Little Blue Books in the War on Bigotry and Bunk" in *Kansas History* 1 (1978): 160.

3. Pragmatism and Feminism

Pragmatism has both conceptual and historical roots (though, admittedly, concepts are essentially historical). Pragmatism is the brainchild of a small group of American philosophers, acolytes, and practitioners of “social service” (including Jane Addams, of course, to whom John Dewey dedicates his book *Democracy and Education*) affiliated with Harvard University and the University of Chicago from the late 1870s (when Charles Sanders Peirce is credited with first mentioning the term in a meeting of the ironically titled Harvard Metaphysical Club) to its fall from grace with the death of John Dewey in 1951 and its reascendancy through Richard Rorty’s early books like *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* in 1970s. Pragmatism’s two major tributaries were democracy and Darwinism.²⁵

Chicago pragmatism’s historical connections with Jane Addams’s enterprise at Hull House are widely known, as Dewey visited often. During his first visit to Chicago in 1893 to view the city and consider an employment opportunity at the university, Dewey stayed at Hull House, writing Addams in a later correspondence that “I cannot tell you how much good I got from my stay at Hull-House. My indebtedness to you for giving me an insight into matters there is great;” Dewey explained that every day he stayed within those walls, added “to my conviction that you had taken the right way.”²⁶ Soon after his visit to Hull House, Dewey wrote back to his wife Alice explaining that “you can’t really get rid of this feeling ... that there is a ‘method’ and if you could only get hold of it things could be so tremendously straightened out.”²⁷ Dewey had things to

²⁵ Louis Menand. *The Metaphysical Club* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2001), 277

²⁶ Mary Jo Deegan. *Jane Addams and the Men of the Chicago School* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1988), 251.

²⁷ Robert Westbrook. *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 84.

learn from Addams, and when he accepted the Chicago job in 1894 he set about building ties between the university and Hull House, becoming a board member in 1897 and serving along with his colleague and former student George Herbert Mead.²⁸

Pragmatism rejects positivistic assumptions about the epistemological duality of the world (true/false, good/bad, man/woman, etc.), the objectivity of knowledge, the fundamental separation between the acting subject and his or her environment, and understands that classification always belies normative judgment.²⁹ It should be clear, then, that these values line up almost verbatim with feminism's questioning of the epistemological certainty of gender and sex categories. Addams set herself apart from academic pragmatism by means of a rejection of the traditional institutions within which philosophy was practiced. Like John Stuart Mill, the ardent feminist and utilitarian that preceded her work by two generations, she was a philosopher, but she was not a professor. Addams was a practitioner. According to Mary Jo Deegan's book *Addams and the Men of the Chicago School*, "Addams was a *critical* pragmatist. With this term, an emphasis is placed on her radical extension of the tenets of pragmatism developed by the Chicago School of Pragmatism" to places outside the academy.³⁰ These tenets include the belief in radical, social democracy, the inclusivity of democratic institutions,

²⁸ Deegan, *Chicago School*, 251.

²⁹ "John J. Stuhr, who prefers the label *Classical American Philosophy* to *pragmatism*, also defines it historically and thematically, and lists the following defining characteristics: (1) the rejection of the central problems of modern philosophy, which presuppose such dichotomies as percept/concept, reason/will, thought/purpose, intellect/emotion, appearance/reality, experience/nature, belief/action, theory/practice, facts/values, and self/others; (2) fallibilism, or the impossibility of attaining unrevisable, certain empirical knowledge as an irreducible dimension of the human condition; (3) pluralism or experiences, values, and meanings; (4) radical empiricism, according to which experiencing subject and experienced object constitute a primal, integral, relational unity; (5) treatment of the results of experimental inquiry as the measure of theory; (6) meliorism, the view that human action can improve the human condition; and (7) the centrality of community and the social, such that the individual is intrinsically constituted by and in her or his social relations, thus linking the attainment of individuality with the creation of community." Charlene Haddock Seigfried. *Feminism and Pragmatism: Reweaving the Social Fabric* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 8.

and the belief that action should be purposive and directed at change. The difference between the men of the Chicago School and Addams was simple: for her, radical social democracy was not political; it was economic, racial, and gendered as well. This is the Addams that Marcet so respects, the Addams that penned Marcet's all-time favorite book, *Peace and Bread in a Time of War*.

Jane Addams's decision to become a critical (or extra-institutional) pragmatist was related to her feminist position. This means that at root critical or cultural pragmatism and feminism are historically *and* thematically linked. Traditional political institutions had proven ineffective and even harmful to Addams's dedication to the causes of women's suffrage and racial equality. This was demonstrated in her decision to support Roosevelt and the Progressives in the 1912 presidential campaign, a campaign for which she gave the nomination speech for Roosevelt at the national convention, becoming the first woman to be invited to give such a speech. Despite her success on that level, though, and despite rhetoric about a suffrage plank in the 1912 platform, Addams became convinced that she had mistakenly supported a campaign that Deegan describes as "anti-suffrage and anti-black."³¹ Her shift out of national politics and into local programs had begun with her work at Hull House, but Addams consolidated her work there after the ill-fated campaign.

Marcet's appreciation of her aunt's work intensified at this point, and their relationship grew closer and more collegial, Marcet learning from Addams's experiences and from the fecundity of her unique feminist/pragmatist position, a position that had, though it proved troublesome in the election arena, garnered Addams much worthy

³⁰ Deegan, *Chicago School*, 248.

³¹ Deegan, *Chicago School*, 264.

attention and praise. Still wary of the size and scope of her aunt's proclivity toward institutionalization at Hull House, Marcet, on her return to Girard in 1913, decided to create an institution of her own, an institution that demonstrated the first movement toward her own somewhat different version of critical pragmatism, her own *cultural* pragmatism. Instead of creating an "aid" institution, like Addams had, Marcet longed to revivify a sense of collective feeling and action from the bottom up, a club, a group that may develop into an organization and then, perhaps, into something else organic but less structurally defined; hers was a dream, much like Nietzsche's, of a massive movement toward self-actualization, a call to personhood. And as vivid as those dreams now were for Marcet, she started small, focusing her attention of the immediate problem of the plight of children in southeastern Kansas.

When she returned to Girard, Marcet noticed that the small community lacked resources for young people to grow in culture and education and to interact with each other in positive ways. Being an atheist and somewhat of a young upstart in the community, Marcet suggested to the local church women that the town's congregations should take all their donations for foreign missionary work and save them up for a year, using the money to create a place where the local youth could meet, visit, and dance, chaperoned, of course, by a local adult. Upon the local ladies' negative reaction to her proposal, Marcet interjected, "I can't see how you people in this town can shut your eyes to the conditions all around you and be so interested in Timbuctoo when people right at your front door and in such need," explaining further that "I am getting so that I can't bear to go through the [miner's] camps, I feel so guilty to be doing nothing."³² The

³² Marcet to "Geliebte Grossmutter," 28 July, 1915. S.A. Haldeman Mss. Collection, Lilly Library, Box 1, Folder, Biographical and Genealogical Information.

women rejected her proposal offhand, and Marcet went about creating her own version of the proposed youth complex, donating the funds and administrating it all herself. “She organized the ‘Jolly Club’ made up of boys and girls from mining towns near Girard, rented a hall, and turned it into an attractive place for dancing and recreation. She also purchased seven acres of land for a community center – to include baseball diamonds, tennis courts, and recreation grounds for the younger children.”³³

Though Marcet’s earliest attempts at meliorism were small and were attempted with somewhat different purposes than Addams’ large-scale institutional endeavors at Hull House, Marcet did, in her correspondence with Addams, share her successes and her thanks for her aunt’s influence. In a 1922 letter to Addams, Marcet explains that Addams is “[f]orever an inspiration and an example, and a proof to me that all I believe in and hold most dear in life is worthy of belief and effort.”³⁴ Over the next 15 years, Marcet built her Jolly Clubs up into a regional initiative to educate and provide cultural resources to the young people in and around her community. As early as 1916, Marcet had established an Italian club that met on Sunday mornings, a social hour for older boys on Wednesday evenings, at which her presence as chaperone “keeps gambling and other mischief from starting,” as well as a younger boys club, which Marcet believed would be her “star club.”³⁵ Marcet’s clubs were very popular, and the time came that, in order to be able to administrate all of the clubs herself, she had to limit some of the membership; she limited the young boys club to thirty and the older boys club to fifty. In a draft fragment to “Auntie,” Marcet explains that she is setting up a “municipal theatre” at the behest of the club ladies and already has a collection of five plays on her desk, “written

³³ Cothran, “The Little Blue Book Man and the Great American Parade,” 51.

³⁴ Marcet to “Auntie,” January 23, 1922. DeLoach Collection, Folder 173.

by youngsters in Girard” that were ready to be performed. Marcet guaranteed her aunt that “I keep them thinking and talking which are the first two steps toward achieving.”³⁶ In another undated fragment to “Auntie,” Marcet says that her successes in Girard, though her projects are of a different nature and a different scope, are “a direct result of the talks I had with you.”³⁷

Marcet’s youth clubs represented the first in a three-tier campaign. After her clubs became so successful, Marcet, in 1921, raised the stakes and consolidated her cultural and educational influence into a school at which she was the instructor. Marcet funded this school herself as she had funded her other activities, and her own daughter, Alice, attended. Thanking Addams for her hospitality during a recent visit to Chicago, Marcet explains that

[i]t was a whole winter packed into seven perfect days! We talk and talk of it and relive its fruits in our school and our rythms [sic]. And such an adorable, orthodox, complete little school as it is now. Really, I’m enormously and, I think, justly proud of it and of the results I am getting. Do you know, Aunt Jane, nothing except writing, has even given me half so much pleasure and solid satisfaction as this work with these little folks.³⁸

Much of Marcet’s work with her Montessori school is lost to history, but it stands as an important attempt to restructure and improve the life conditions for those closest to her, fellow citizens of Crawford County and their children.

Marcet’s school stands as the second major step toward what will become her final enterprise, the enterprise of writing and publishing. This is a natural progression for Marcet, ever the lover of books, because books relay particular insights into the nuance of

³⁵ Marcet to “Auntie,” N.D. DeLoach Collection, Folder 173.

³⁶ Marcet to “Auntie” fragment, N.D. DeLoach Collection, Folder 173.

³⁷ *Ibid*

³⁸ Marcet to “Auntie” March 11, 1921. DeLoach Collection, Folder 173.

personhood. They are invitations toward growth, and they, more than any other object, effect change in a person from the inside. “[R]eading a book is as exciting as meeting a person,” Marcet explains to her aunt; “[o]ne gets a different point of view when one meets life from this angle ... Books are great friends.”³⁹

4. Publishing

Though Marcet’s lifelong melioristic project reaches its greatest effectiveness in her writings, her third tier of development is fraught with difficulty and emotional strain. Like her community projects, Marcet began her publishing career small, publishing a four-page pamphlet called *The Booster* beginning in February 1917. *The Booster* was aimed at helping rural folks save and invest their money at The State Bank of Girard. Her husband’s paper, *The Appeal*, printed the pamphlets and aided in their distribution. Early on, Marcet was commended on the good sense of her writing by then Kansas Governor Arthur Capper, who commented that Marcet’s *Booster* was “a live, interesting little publication ... full of interesting, readable matter.”⁴⁰ Slowed down little by the birth of her daughter Alice that same year, Marcet managed, as I explained in Chapter 1, to buy her husband and herself one-third ownership of *The Appeal*.

In 1919, Emanuel and Marcet had purchased Wayland’s remaining share for another \$25,000 with the profits from Emanuel’s new brainchild, The Pocket Series, small books that could fit in a pocket and be produced cheap. These would in 1925 turn into the Little Blue Books that would make Haldeman-Julius a household name. By 1923, Marcet and Emanuel, writing together, had published four stories in *The Atlantic Monthly* and the Little Blue Books were selling faster and faster. New titles were being

³⁹ Marcet to “Auntie” November 1, 1918. DeLoach Collection, Folder 173.

⁴⁰ Cothran, “The Little Blue Book Man and the Great American Parade,” 72.

added at the rate of two per week. Moreover, Emanuel and Marcet were riding high from Brentano's publication of their first novel, *Dust*, which won positive reviews for its sparse rendering of life on the Kansas plains.⁴¹

At the point when the professional possibilities for the Haldeman-Juliuses looked endless, their life became much more complicated. 1924 was a year of intense and difficult internal change in the couple's relationship. The first setback of the year was a harbinger of bad things to come. The couple's fifth short story, "Up," was rejected by *The Atlantic Monthly*, and Emanuel's immense confidence and sense of personal freedom backfired when Marcet learned about his proclivity for sexual liaisons with the younger ladies in the community. In a letter dated May 13, 1924, Marcet writes

You have your own life to live and must decide for yourself – as I must – what is right or wrong. I don't want to hamper you or make you feel tied in any way and if you want me to I am going to stay with you through everything. Bu[t] dear I think you will understand that I cannot keep my own self-respect if I let you com[e] to me from other women or caress me with the thought in my mind that even so you caress young girls. I should be no better than the fast women themselves and by sanctioning the others I should be truly culpable I cannot & will not share you. My humiliation in my own eyes and in the eyes of A[lice] and H[enry] later, would be too profound. I could not bear it. I am proud, and already I have suffered past belief, I have burned & bled with the consciousness of insult and outrage... If you ever do come to me again it must be with a pledge in your heart that never again will you be with another woman.⁴²

In response to his own marital failings, Emanuel did an interesting thing: instead of trying to win his wife back personally, a feat that he did not ever attempt again, he wooed her back professionally.

In the fall of that same year Marcet wrote to Emanuel from Cedarville, her family home in Illinois where she had taken refuge from their personal tumult, saying she was

⁴¹ Cothran, "The Little Blue Book Man and the Great American Parade," 132.

pleased that Manuel had asked her to contribute some of her own writing, pleased that she was “being discovered [as an author] – even at this late date” by her husband.⁴³

Marcet relays in that letter two characters she has long considered writing about:

“Madame Pompadour and Aunt Jane.” She does not complete a Blue Book on Jane Addams, though, until after her aunt’s death in 1936. Marcet urges her husband that “if you really want to help me get results, as I seem, for the first time, to feel you do – *don’t hurry me.*”⁴⁴ Marcet’s recognition that she had been given, through a circuitous and painful series of events, a new chance to write, to act on her pragmatic feminism, is obvious in this letter. Though she funded her husband’s successful publishing endeavors, and though her name was on the title right next to his, this was her first real chance achieve authority and to see its fruit, to bring her meliorism to the masses. That it came at the price of her personal happiness and marital security did not stop her from, as she put it to her husband in that same letter, “set[ting] a new standard” for the women of her generation.

5. *Woman*

Marcet joined the publishing endeavor with the cautious steadiness that her prior experience with Emanuel had taught her was most productive. She began writing small essays in the *Haldeman-Julius Weekly*, including a column called “What the Editor’s Wife Is Thinking About” which became quite popular. As her popularity grew, her belief that she had a particular gift and message that could benefit people was restored, and soon, while she kept up the column in the weekly magazine, she graduated to larger

⁴² Marcet to Emanuel. May 13, 1924. Cothran, “The Little Blue Book Man and the Great American Parade,” 210.

⁴³ Marcet to Emanuel. September 4, 1924. DeLoach Collection, Folder 206.

⁴⁴ Marcet to Emanuel. September 4, 1924. DeLoach Collection, Folder 206. Emphasis added.

projects, publishing most of her early Blue Books on race, including *The Story of Lynching: An Exploration of Southern Psychology, Violence, and What the Negro Students Endure in Kansas*. As I will investigate further in Chapter 3, these books were compelling and provocative in their resistance to white racism, and they defined Marcet as both an expert narrator, a first rate reporter, and an agent of social change.

The second phase of Marcet's Blue Book authorship was more autobiographical, much like her original fiction. Undaunted by the requisite deferential kowtowing that came with writing with Emanuel, Marcet tackled the issues that defined her life writ large: recognizing and improving the historical and cultural status of women. Marcet's goal in defining the woman problem was aimed at bettering conditions in which women operated, and her own unique version of pragmatic feminism came out clearest, eschewing positivistic assertions and hasty historical conclusions, denying anything resembling essentialist readings of women in the vein of Charlotte Perkins Gilman. In books such as *Jane Addams as I Knew Her*, *Why I Believe in Companionate Marriage*, *Three Generations of Changing Morals*, and *Spurts from an Interrupted Pen* Marcet proved herself a nuanced observer and astute student of women's experience. It was this phase to which her audience responded most positively, quickly making her one of the best selling authors in the Haldeman-Julius literary canon.⁴⁵

Ultimately, Emanuel's attempt to regain control of Marcet through his publishing business had the opposite outcome, and because Emanuel could only respond to Marcet personally in haughty, disinterested tones, she resigned herself to living her intimate life with one of "the most selfish, self-centered men on earth ... who never, unless he

⁴⁵ Marcet's books on companionate marriage and Jane Addams both sold hundreds of thousands of copies. See Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, *The First Hundred Million* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1928).

happens to be in a rarely expansive mood, is even slightly interested in the thoughts, wishes, and feelings of those around him.”⁴⁶ Having learned from her husband’s previous attempt at control, Marcet took control herself, living the most important aspects of her personality through her final works, evidently struggling to effectuate a written legacy for other women. Immensely hopeful and still in love, though, she never stopped trying to make an impression on her husband, writing in a letter to her adopted daughter Josephine in 1926 that “I can write, and I am not lazy ... I am going to turn out such a volume of salable stuff ... that Daddy will open his eyes.”⁴⁷ Though she pursued her own agendas, evidence supports the notion that Marcet still longed, despite and amid her most ardent intellectual pursuits, for Emanuel’s affection. In some strange way, then, his scorn served as a burning catalyst for Marcet’s literary pursuits while at the same time cauterizing her to his personal indifference.

Though the two people closest to Marcet, Emanuel Haldeman-Julius and Jane Addams, most certainly cared for her in their own ways, they also ignored her as they pursued the building of their respective institutions. And Marcet’s relation with both of them engendered a similar type of effect in her: yearning and learning. Marcet recalled often that her aunt did not have time for her, and when she did, the conversations were largely “impersonal” because Addams was busy lecturing, writing, entertaining, advising, and building.⁴⁸ Her experiences at Hull House provided Marcet with the context, knowledge, desire, and opportunity to become a serious feminist pragmatist in her own right, using her critical assessments of her aunt’s work as stepping stones to her own

⁴⁶ Marcet to Jane Addams, N.D. DeLoach Collection, Folder 170. Also used in Cothran, “The Little Blue Book Man and the Great American Parade,” 241.

⁴⁷ Marcet to “Joey,” September 28, 1926. DeLoach Collection, Folder 170. Also used in Cothran, “The Little Blue Book Man and the Great American Parade,” 241.

projects. For instance, being largely ignored by her aunt opened opportunities to have regular conversations with professor John Dewey and his pragmatistic fellows.⁴⁹

There is no doubt that in her contact with Dewey and her aunt, Marcet learned the central tenet of pragmatism, a tenet that some scholars credit Addams and others credit Dewey with “discovering”: that “[k]nowledge is instrumental, not in the sense of merely linking means to predetermined ends, but in the sense of a tool used, along with other tools, for organizing experiences satisfactorily.”⁵⁰ And while Addams pursued the organization of institutional experience, Marcet considered, in the last part of her writing career, that perhaps pragmatism had something more personal to learn from her feminism. That lesson would come from her experience as a woman, devoid of unnecessary theoretical frameworks and agendas. Marcet’s final philosophical insight was boldly and astutely characterized by the valorization of her own experience. With this goal in mind, Marcet began, in 1936, drafting a larger feminist/pragmatist book called, simply, *Woman*. Though the book was never published in its entirety, some of it, though not the part of interest to this analysis, was condensed into Marcet’s Blue Book titled *Three Generations of Changing Morals*. It is her unpublished manuscript notes – which have languished unread in archives for 60 years - that speak most directly and most radically to her agenda.

Woman bursts with the desire and call for change and eschews essentialist sexual notions for a much more fluid, experience-based understanding of womanhood. In her notes, Marcet explains that this book is “[n]ot [to be] written academically;” it was to be “merely the record of one woman’s observations and conclusions, [a] book dealing not so

⁴⁸ Haldeman-Julius, *Jane Addams*, 8.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

*much with theories as with life as it has been actually seen.*⁵¹ Marcet’s “underlying premise” is that “morals are acquired, not innate – the product of training” and “*are to be surveyed from the point of view of their effect upon social life, their practical consequences – not their conformity to some prior arbitrary standard.*”⁵² Here, more than anywhere else in her writings, Marcet’s pragmatist tendencies appear. She echoes the pluralistic, naturalistic, and dynamic ethical code of the Classical American Pragmatists, but she does it in a very different context. Marcet wants most of all to revive women’s experience as a viable and legitimate mode of thought, a mode with its own lexicons and agendas, a mode that is powerful, subtle, and which has largely been ignored. Marcet explains, in *Woman*, that she “must treat this subject from a woman’s viewpoint,” a perspective that has been, due largely to the patristic interests of the publishing industry, unavailable to the public at large, what she calls “the composite mind.”⁵³ In this manuscript, Marcet seems to be drawing on her own painful experience, encouraging women to remember that feminism, both personal and political, must have a strong egalitarian impulse. Though it was not the case in her marriage, Marcet implores her audience to remember that true relationship “can be based only upon genuine equality,” urging her readers to take to heart the simple, pragmatic and feminist notion that “[w]here rights and duties are fairly proportioned, there only can a truly human association exist ... [a]nything less than this is the relationship between master and slave.”⁵⁴

6. Conclusion

⁵⁰ Haddock Seigfried, *Feminism and Pragmatism*, 7.

⁵¹ Marcet Haldeman-Julius. *Woman*. DeLoach Collection, Folder 137.

⁵² *Ibid.*. Emphasis added.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

Marcet believed strongly that writing held some special relation to truth, if not to truth, then to power, sincerely believing that “nothing speeds change so much ... as communication,” and her communication, in her letters and her books is what is left, serving as one tool of many by which to measure the social progress of women, one memory marker signifying struggles so near in time but so distant in popular memory.⁵⁵ Marcet is a problematic historical subject because she complicates every impulse to reify her, to categorize her. So, the only available means of making her comprehensible is to understand her vision, her journey. She was exceptional in almost every way: her education, her wealth, her marriage, her relation to Addams, and her authorship, but, somehow, she was representative as well: in her womanhood, her motherhood, her love of dogs, children, and horses, her love of simple farm work and her complicated but sincere attachment to Kansas and to her husband.

On the occasion her death from breast cancer in 1941, John Gunn wrote of Marcet that her work

may serve as an insight, both sad and proud, into the poignancy of a life whose flame was too brilliant, whose radiance for others was given at the expense of its own self-consuming, and whose soft farewell gleam was hastened by the unbearable warmth and light of its rare intensity ... Marcet was the rare incarnation of the very spirit of love: love of all things, love of life, love of love – love so profound and warm that even its shadows glowed with a color more rich than the pale sunlight of less bountiful loves reduced to the measure of more calculating lives Marcet loved so much that, it seems, she could not live so long And it will also be remembered that Marcet loved herself least. That is why others loved her so much.⁵⁶

Marcet’s work was always personal, and her constant desire (and ability – that is, the economic and educational status that enabled her) to share her ideas, to get feedback, and

⁵⁴ Haldeman-Julius, *Woman*, 8.

⁵⁵ Haldeman-Julius, *Woman*, 14.

to establish the written word, once again, as a point of cultural leverage make Marcet Haldeman-Julius truly an exceptional woman. She was a champion of the poor, of women, of children. The affordable books that Marcet and Emanuel produced were small enough to fit in a pocket, but despite their size and 15,000 word limit, they were deeply subversive objects, each a tiny fulcrum from which to push forward social change.

The Haldeman-Julius publishing company continued well into the 1960s under the management of Marcet and Emanuel's son, Henry Julius-Haldeman, a college dropout. Henry legally switched the order of his names to demonstrate his devotion and respect for his mother. Though their Girard offices and printing presses would outlive both Marcet and Emanuel, their offices do not remain. They were burned along with most of their contents, millions of copies of unsold Little Blue Books, by a "stray" bottle rocket on July 4, 1976, the celebration of America's Bicentennial. What remains is an ironic, absent edifice of radical history not in concrete form but scattered diffuse and incomplete across a very different America.

⁵⁶ John Gunn. "Marcet." February 15, 1941. DeLoach Collection, Folder 170.

Chapter 4

The Politics of Racial Reform in 1920s Kansas

In 1927, Kansas was a hotbed of political and social animosity centering on race and labor. This animosity, though, had been in the works for a while. In 1919, Republican Governor Henry Allen created the Kansas “industrial court law,” which limited the power of organized labor in Kansas.¹ The law came into being through a statewide coal strike in 1919 that shut down coal mining in the state, throwing the mostly Republican ownership into an uncomfortable financial lurch. Though some of the coalmines in Kansas were owned by companies in surrounding states and even the East Coast, the Republican governor felt the need to alleviate the strain of the strike, freeing up his constituency and guaranteeing his party’s victory in the next gubernatorial election.

In a bold maneuver, Allen pushed through this piece of legislation that “made it unlawful to picket for the purpose of suspending the operation of such ‘essential’ industries as the railroads.”² In essence, the effectiveness of this law was embedded in the fact that those industries that were considered “essential” were typically the only industries in which organized labor had a strong presence. The language of the law is tepid, but its effects were widespread and crippling to organized labor in Kansas. In fact, according to Sloan, “Governor Allen was probably partly responsible for the support that

¹ Charles William Sloan, Jr. “Kansas Battles the Invisible Empire: the Legal Ouster of the KKK From Kansas, 1922-1927” in *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 40 (1974): 394.

² Sloan, “Invisible Empire,” 395.

the shop craftsmen were giving the Invisible Empire” due to his hasty belief that “the public was at the mercy of organized labor.”³

The Kansas industrial court law was one of two major political maneuvers set forth by Governor Allen. The second, in 1927, was the legal ouster of the Ku Klux Klan from Kansas. I see these two maneuvers as fundamentally related.

By 1927 the KKK in Kansas had grown strong. Its membership, particularly in south central and southeastern Kansas, was 40,000.⁴ Allen’s ouster petition came about, not because the KKK displayed particular violence in Kansas, but because the KKK had insinuated itself, by 1922, into Kansas communities where organized labor seemed to have power. According to Charles William Sloan, Jr.,

Allen dispatched Kansas’ attorney general, Richard J. Hopkins, to Arkansas City to determine the extent of involvement between the shop craftsmen [who were on strike] and the Klan. As a result of this investigation, the governor on July 8 issued a proclamation prohibiting the appearance on Kansas streets of anyone wearing a mask In justifying the order, he argued that the activities of ‘bodies of masked men assemble[d] for . . . parading and so-called ceremonies’ contributed to an atmosphere of fear and intimidation in communities where ‘industrial quarrels’ were in progress.⁵

Allen proclaimed the ouster of the KKK was a great victory for human tolerance and the state of Kansas. In fact, Kansas became through this legislation the first state to legally oust the KKK from within its borders, and despite the fact that historians seem to believe that it was Allen’s personality as a “flamboyant pragmatist” that led him to initiate this ouster, it is my assertion that Allen, a Republican, sought to oust the KKK from Kansas largely because they had built up followings in communities where organized labor existed and played on the fact that, in most cases, the majority of the non-striking

³ Sloan, “Invisible Empire,” 395.

⁴ Sloan, “Invisible Empire,” 393.

workers were largely African American. In the case of the railroad workers strike in 1919, seventy percent of the workers struck and almost without exception, the remaining thirty percent were black.⁶ The KKK represented the possibility of consolidating labor along the lines of race⁷ (something of great interest to newly arrived immigrants who – despite the fact the Klan was nominally anti-immigration – were sometimes able to secure status and power both within labor and within the Klan while playing along the lines of the division between blacks and whites).⁸

The ouster itself attests to the fact that Allen’s pursuit of the KKK was far more about suppressing labor than about racial equality. The ouster’s second clause read,

the Ku Klux Klan claimed to be the “revival and renewal” of the Klan of Reconstruction days ... and had chosen the Klan name ‘for the purpose of intimidation and threats against persons who do not conform to [its] plans, doctrines, theories, or practices.’⁹

The second clause was thrown out, however, because the Kansas Supreme Court considered it immaterial. The court attested to the fact that the prosecution could not demonstrate that those members of the KKK who did commit acts of violence and intimidation were doing so under orders from the Imperial Kleagle. The ouster succeeded only on the technicality that the KKK was operating as a foreign corporation (its headquarters were, of course, in Georgia) that was operating without a charter from the state charter board.

⁵ Sloan, “Invisible Empire,” 394.

⁶ Sloan, “Invisible Empire,” 393.

⁷ The fact that the KKK was anti-Catholic may have played into its ultimate inability to consolidate upon its entry into labor in Kansas, as many of the laborers were either immigrants themselves or children of immigrants. As I noted earlier, many of these immigrants came from Italy and held tightly to their Catholicism.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Sloan, “Invisible Empire,” 397.

While it is true that the KKK's infiltration of organized labor in Kansas was not completely unique and that KKK presence in union affairs had, in other locations, disorganized labor and left a rift between the two organizations, conditions in Kansas made the scenario that the KKK infiltrated the unions to disorganize them rather untenable.¹⁰

Some unionists did theorize, however, that lead counsel for the KKK in the case brought before the Kansas Supreme Court, John S. Dean, only accepted the responsibility because he lent his first allegiance to the virulently anti-union Kansas Employers Association. One prominent labor leader wrote in an editorial in the April 11, 1924, edition of the *Wichita Beacon* that organized labor was more “powerful than the Klan and is not going to be disorganized by any deep laid scheme of John Dean or any representative of big business.”¹¹ This position is untenable because the KKK had organizational economic concerns of its own like creating more revenue from membership dues that came before big business, despite its certain ties to Kansas republicans.

It was not the state of Kansas which ousted the KKK in 1927 because the people of the state were against its racist and conservative politics (politics that, for instance, included Bible reading in schools and a strong anti-Catholic bias) – but that under the pretense of racial dignity, Governor Henry Allen lit the rhetorical fireworks of racial equality to finish the misdirection of killing organized labor in Kansas. As H.A. Strong, a

¹⁰ This is the argument made by David Chalmers in *Hooded Americanism*. Chalmers claims that the Klan held a “general belief that all [labor] strikes ... naturally had to be the product of foreign agitators.” David Chalmers. *Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan. Essays* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987), 145.

¹¹ Sloan, “Invisible Empire,” 394.

writer for the pro-Klan periodical called *The Independent*, published in the Crawford county village of Mulberry, explained,

Of course the Kansas Klan will ignore the Kansas supreme court decision and go right on to do business ... and that “the Kansas Klan will continue to function ‘just as [the] anti-slavery spirit of the North rose in keen rebellion of spirit against the Dred Scott decision.’¹²

It was not, after all, Allen’s move that killed the Klan in Kansas, but rather it was – on the national level - so fraught with internal fighting and “plagued by dissidents” that it “splintered badly.”¹³

Nineteen twenty four was a turning point for the Klan in Kansas as well as for *The Independent*, which decided to embrace the demographic layout of Crawford County by soliciting the readership of laborers, most of whom were, by the mid twenties, not direct immigrants but children of immigrants who were more accepting of the paper’s Americanizing directive.¹⁴ That year, the paper initiated numerous new columns taken from such periodicals as *The Illinois Miner* and brought together its strong pro-Klan message with its emergent focus on labor. The Klan, which needed membership, saw

¹² Sloan, “Invisible Empire,” 401.

¹³ Chalmers, *Hooded*, 335.

¹⁴ Evidence suggests that before its demise, the Klan had a stronger presence in Kansas than previously thought. Even *The Independent*, whose editorial staff supported the Klan’s “100 per cent American” program that advocated against “the intermarriage and intercohabitation and intermixing of the races,” toward the end of “purity of race” and denigrated the catholic and the Jew, believed that the pro-Klan republican candidate, Ben Paulen, would lose the 1924 gubernatorial race to Jonathon Davis, a democrat who, though he had had Klan support in the past, aligned himself with the national party and denounced the Klan.¹⁴ The reason the editors at *The Independent* believed this was because William Allen White, certainly one of the most famous Kansans – and a proud Republican – was running against Paulen as an Independent, hoping to split the Republican ticket and show his Republican party that the KKK was not a political asset. Writing for *The Independent*, H.A. Strong speculated that Davis, the incumbent, chose a smarter path by downplaying the issue of the KKK while William Allen White and Ben Paulen fought over it. Though ideologically, *The Independent* supported Paulen, they thought his explicitly pro-Klan status would damage his campaign. Needless to say, they were surprised when Paulen won, despite William Allen White pulling over 150,000 of 600,000 votes cast away from the Republican ticket. That Paulen, who was known as the anti-labor, anti-farmer, pro-interest candidate could win speaks volumes toward the political weight and popular sympathy the Invisible Empire had in 1924 Kansas.

labor as a possible well to tap. The February 20, 1925, *Independent* claimed the Russian revolution and restructuring to be a grand experiment that “overturned all this high caste order of economics, and is seeking to establish an economic system that will get along without Rothchilds and Rockefellers” and claimed hopes that “Russia will succeed.”¹⁵

The consolidation of organized labor and the KKK was orchestrated by *The Independent* which had in 1925 the largest circulation of any weekly publication in Crawford County, far outdistancing even the Haldeman-Juliuses in the race for a local readership. This wide circulation was made possible by *The Independent's* ability to insinuate itself into the labor community by means of strong identifications with miners as Americans, asking for their separation from their catholic parents and their parents' countries of origin. Since the first major wave of immigration occurred in Kansas in the 1880s, now the labor community consisted of the children of those miners who were willing to throw off their parents' Catholicism and to embrace the “100 per cent American” rhetoric the KKK seemed to be offering, through the instantiation of groups targeted at winning over and protestantizing immigrants and their children. According to Sloan,

They declared that the "Invisible Empire" stood for Protestant, Fundamental Christianity, old-fashioned morality, and patriotism. At the same time, while arguing that the organization was not opposed to Catholics, Negroes, Jews, and the foreign-born, they nonetheless capitalized upon the prejudices held by many citizens towards these groups.¹⁶

The new Klan in Kansas operated a rhetorical machine that displaced hate rhetoric with the rhetoric aimed at creating the tolerance for what they considered nothing more than natural inequalities.

¹⁵ *The Independent*, February 20, 1925.

Nature has ordained that the sexes have no equality As the second in physical strength and mental regularity woman loses in her competition with man in his own field of life activity – usefulness or pleasure, but in her own sphere she is the queen of the earth and no man will deny it.¹⁷

Similarly,

In the intermixing, and intercohabitating of the white and colored races the Negro without question has had the worst of it Purity of race should appeal to him in the same measure it should appeal to the white race, and DOES appeal to all right thinking, moral ... people of BOTH races. One of the BLACKEST chapters in American history has been the devilish, and demoralizing cohabitation between the two races. If there is a HELL the lowest pit in its should be reserved for the men and women in America of BOTH the white and black races, who have contributed to the mixing of the races. A damnation deeper than HELL itself is due them [T]here is NO good reason why the Negro should be Anti-Klan at all. He is being duped by bunco steerers like White into an anti-Klan attitude.¹⁸

This “tolerant” rhetoric of natural inequality combined with statements debasing those members of the national Klan that committed hate crimes coalesced with other hot button issues in Crawford County, like religion, to win over a significant percentage of the population. “In fact the 4000 Klansmen in Crawford County are the same men and young men they were before the joined the Klan. Just as with any church membership there are many who stumble and fall,” but those “who have joined the Klan for a lark, or to get even with some enemy have been sorely disappointed.”¹⁹ The “new” Klan was tolerant and inviting, positioning itself, via *The Independent* and other means, between organized laborers and their American ideals. The fact that Governor Henry Allen’s Industrial Court was abolished due to its unconstitutionality by the Supreme Court of the

¹⁶ Sloan, “Invisible Empire,” 393.

¹⁷ *The Independent*, August 29, 1924.

¹⁸ *The Independent*, September 26, 1924.

¹⁹ *The Independent*, August 22, 1924.

United States in 1925 did nothing but help the cause of reuniting the Klan and labor interests.²⁰

Marcet and Emanuel Haldeman-Julius found themselves struggling to find an audience for their socialist material in Crawford County as *The Independent* had displaced them as the central edifice for labor media and subtly introduced racial and religious divisions into Kansas labor's vision of America. By the mid twenties, the Haldeman-Juliuses found themselves targets of *The Independent* and its Klan interests due to their competition with the former for the labor market, their anti-racist views, their atheistic stance, and for what editors of *The Independent* considered a general distaste for American ideals. At the heart of their distaste for American ideals lived a belief in the relationship between freedom and labor. Noting the important connection between race and labor in Kansas, Marcet wanted to state her position very clearly and publicly: she was "entirely opposed to the segregation of races" and believed that African Americans "should have the same privileges in schools, in traveling, in restaurants, in theaters, in stores, in libraries, [and] ... *most especially in labor unions!*"²¹

At the base of this anti-Americanness was not what one might expect, not a thoroughgoing socialism or a radical political agenda but something much more threatening to the coherency of the KKK, a belief in the equity of blacks and whites. Focusing its attack on Emanuel, the *Independent* explained that something insidious must be going on with a "man who publishes" a blue book called "On the Myth of Nordic Supremacy" and who "virtually proves" the "white race" is "inferior to races of color."²² *The Independent* labeled the Haldeman-Julius stance on race a great inferiority complex.

²⁰ *The Independent*, April 17, 1925.

²¹ Haldeman-Julius, *Joseph McCabe*, 72. Emphasis added.

In an editorial entitled “The Blue Books,” Orin Strong wrote, “Julius and his superficial scandalmongers would knock the prop down that holds the building up.”²³ This building, of course, houses the racial superiority of the white race. Strong continues, referring again to one of the Haldeman-Julius Blue Books,

The White man – the long blond, did not subdue the jungle and the Polar regions by accident. He did it by design. He has left his impress by force and blarney – employing either with equal vim and purpose. If he succumbs to the Yellows, the Browns and the Blacks, it will be because he is too well fed, and not because nature did not endow him with superlative mind and body. He may be deteriorating, but if so he hasn’t shown it. We had our Yellow Perils, and many other alarms, but the high seas and the solid ground [are] still the playgrounds of the blond Nordic. A mighty man was the Roman Centurian – mind and arms were strong, but the Savage Nordic conquered him in the end – because he was stronger ... [Those] who ridicule the Nordics, merely prove the “Sour Grapes” fable; they recite what they want and not what is. The Nordic may be a hypocrite, but he is not an imbecile. Mr. Julius lambasts [sic] suppression. Even so he thrives because there is no real suppression in this Land of the Free and Home of the Brave.²⁴

While Orin and H.A. Strong berated Emanuel Haldeman-Julius for his un-American belief in the equality of different races, they all but missed the radical message of his wife. The editors of *The Independent* and the leaders of the Klan shared an attitude that women are unthreatening, unthinking, and unable to deal with questions of political or philosophical weight.

And although they are often on the attack about Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, when Marcet is mentioned, not only is her name almost always misspelled, her role in the Haldeman-Julius publishing company is downplayed. Only her wealth is of significance. Indeed, one of the principle attacks on Emanuel is that it was his desire to “court”

²² *The Independent.*, March 5, 1926. Orin B. Strong. *The Independent*, May 7, 1926.

²³ *The Independent*, February 12, 1926.

²⁴ *The Independent*, February 12, 1926.

Marcet's "fortune" in order to allow himself this great opportunity to become owner of "one of the famous estates of this section" and to propel himself to national fame and attention.²⁵ Indeed, Marcet is allocated all the personal strength of a rag doll, in Strong's estimation. Marcet falls victim to "the whole Julius process of marrying an heiress and gradually acquiring control of the property" which becomes "the great inspiration behind Mr. Julius' ethereal flights of mentality" and falls victim to the ideas of her wayward husband, turning her away from the "harmonious ... Girard girl ... who once entertained ideas of American idealism."²⁶ Indeed, as Strong suggests, it is not just the opinion of his newspaper that Marcet's fortune and mind had been captured by this greedy charlatan but that the community agrees. "The Haldeman tragedy is exciting much community pathos – even compassion on the part of those, who believe the accomplished wife to be a victim of the vaulting ambition of an unscrupulous adventurer."²⁷

Though her own faculties were ignored by the editors of *The Independent*, Marcet Haldeman-Julius had already chosen to do battle with the forces of racism in Kansas, and she had already chosen a battlefield. Rather risk taking on *The Independent* and appear to be engaging in a war for readers, a move that might appear to devalue the central question of racism in her home state, Marcet began a thorough research project into the role of the varying degrees of education accessible to blacks in Kansas.

By 1927, the year of Marcet's response to the KKK's "conflagration" in Kansas, much racial animosity had built throughout the state, and especially in Lawrence, the site of Kansas University. In fact, "in 1924 the Kansas Klan held a statewide conference at

²⁵ *The Independent*, May 7, 1926.

²⁶ *The Independent*, May 14, 1926.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

the Bowersock Theater, and Massachusetts Street was lined with the klansmens' cars."²⁸

Racism in Lawrence and at the University was apparent but often went unspoken or at

least unacknowledged. William Tuttle explains,

[T]he University of Kansas, like the state of Kansas itself, operated on two levels. While it congratulated itself on its racially open admissions policy, it also enforced a Jim Crow system of racial separation on campus. As KU's *Weekly Courier* stated "While every Negro – provided he has like endowments – is just as good as a white man, and is equal to him," equality did not mean community. Between the two races there were differences in "temperament" and in "mental qualities": indeed, between them was an "impassable gulf." "For this reason we do not desire to associate with the negroes . . . neither do the negroes as a social class desire to associate with us. It seems a matter of mutual pleasure that the two societies should be separate and independent."²⁹

Racism in Lawrence and at the University was a problem, but its status as a problem was undercut by the pedantic solutions of Jim Crow: mutual separation, the solution that is not a solution but rather an alibi for whites mistreatment of blacks. Indeed, the "increase in racism was painfully evident at the University of Kansas in the 1920s and 1930s."³⁰

While this was a social fact for most whites in the community (and in the administration), this was an actionable item for Marcet Haldeman-Julius.

By this time in the mid 1920s, Haldeman-Julius was a powerful woman who, as an author, had sold thousands of Little Blue Books and who had published two successful novels.³¹ She was indeed, as I noted earlier, one of the most beloved of all the writers in the Haldeman-Julius catalog, more beloved, if less prolific, than her husband. Marcet's reaction came against the institutionalization of racist ideals promulgated by her rivals at

²⁸ William Tuttle. "Separate but Not Equal: African Americans and the 100-year Struggle for Equality in Lawrence and at the University of Kansas, 1850s-1960s," in *Embattled Lawrence: Conflict and Community*, eds. Dennis Domer and Barbara Watkins (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1988), 183.

²⁹ Tuttle, "Separate but Not Equal," 182.

³⁰ Tuttle, "Separate but Not Equal," 183.

The Independent, and unlike her girlhood, in 1927, now the partial owner and writer for the world's largest publishing house, she had the traction – and the audience - to make a public stand against the increasing power of the Klan and the more diffuse power of racism in Kansas. Fed up with the racist agenda of so many Kansans and moved by a story in the August 1927 edition of the *Crisis*, the national publication of the NAACP under the editorship of W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcet focused her attention on eliminating institutional racism at the University of Kansas. Loren Miller, a former student of the University, argued that even though “Kansas stands high in education” and “is a pioneer in social reform and uplift,” numerous racial injustices occur every day at the University under the guidance of Chancellor E.H. Lindley, even though “it is one of his boasts that he comes from abolitionist stock.”³²

Marcet set about researching the situation for an article she planned to write indicting the administration and leadership of the University of Kansas and sent letters asking for explanations and meetings to Lindley, a noted psychologist and former president of the American Association of University Presidents, and a number of others at the University. Lindley, in a prompt response dated September 30, 1927, stated that “As a pupil of David Starr Jordan, Stanley Hall, and William James, I have thought of myself as a humanist. But no doubt age and ‘capitalistic control’ have wrought a change.”³³ Though he does not specify what changes have been wrought by “capitalistic control,” the context of the letter makes clear that Lindley believed that certain subtle forms of discrimination were, though bad on paper, admissible and inevitable in a Republican

³¹ Haldeman-Julius, *First Hundred Million*, 12-16.

³² Loren Miller. “The Unrest Among Negro Students” in *The Crisis* 34 (1927): 187.

³³ E.H. Lindley to “Mrs. Haldeman-Julius.” September 30, 1927. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Pittsburg State University, Folder 89.

controlled state. Here, the connection between economics and racism rears its head. He continues,

In our cafeteria they [African Americans] are welcome, and are enjoying service which they recognize they cannot have with a wide-open policy. They have agreed to limit themselves to a rather large section of the cafeteria, where friendly whites also may come This restriction ... is made necessary by the failure to maintain otherwise a sufficient volume of business to keep the cafeteria going One of the problems yet unsolved here is that of simultaneous use of the swimming pool by blacks and whites. [For that problem, w]e have not found a satisfactory solution.³⁴

The problem of the swimming pool was shaped a bit different, however, in Loren Miller's *Crisis* article. Miller claimed that "[c]olored students, men and women, are absolutely refused permission to use the state-owned swimming pool."³⁵ And it was not only the swimming pool that was off limits, for as Miller writes, that though it

is natural that colored students should seek places on athletic teams. They are absolutely refused any place whatever. Dr. F.C. Allen, head of athletics, said recently that no colored man will ever have a chance as long as he is there. Complaints to the Chancellor meet no consideration, as he avows his support of the present athletic regime.³⁶

Lindley ended his letter with respect for Marcet, writing,

While I have long been a friend of your Blue Books, usually carrying some with me when I travel, I have never had the pleasure of meeting you. When you come to Lawrence I should be glad if you would call at my office and give me the pleasure of acquaintance with you.³⁷

³⁴ E.H. Lindley to "Mrs. Haldeman-Julius." September 30, 1927. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Pittsburg State University, Folder 89.

³⁵ Miller, "Negro Students," 187.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ E.H. Lindley to "Mrs. Haldeman-Julius." September 30, 1927. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Pittsburg State University, Folder 89.

Faced with this disturbing information and some contradictory claims, Marcet set out to do more research, enlisting the help of both James Weldon Johnson and W.E.B. Du Bois of the NAACP. Having collected more data on not only racism at KU but at all the state funded colleges in Kansas, Marcet began preparing for a trip to visit Lindley and to advocate for equality of treatment. She wrote James Weldon Johnson, that as “Kansas is my native state and the Chancellor says that he thinks of himself as a humanist, I am hoping my visit and article may bring about some practical results.”³⁸

The result of her visit was an article for the January 1928 edition of the *Haldeman-Julius Monthly* in which Marcet took the Lindley administration to task for its willful ignorance of subtle and not so subtle forms of racism at the University. She explained,

With [Miller’s] article literally in my hands, I checked each accusation he had made and [with the exception of two items that had been changed since] every charge of his was borne out accurately by the facts [T]he narrowest, most oppressive, most provincially astigmatic atmosphere of all is to be found at the University which should lead the others in culture and breadth of vision. The irony of this is that its Chancellor, Dr. Ernest H. Lindley, who possesses distinction both in mind and appearance, is not only the most scholarly and cultivated of all the Kansas presidents, but as a pupil of David Starr Jordan, Stanley Hall, and William James, wishes to be, feels himself to be, and essentially is – a humanist.³⁹

Not missing the irony in Lindley’s self-assessment, Marcet continued to address his cafeteria policy. In defense of the new, segregated cafeteria

Dr. Lindley explained to me that the old cafeteria in which there was no segregation had run a deficit. (But for the last two years at least, the food was poor; the prices high.) “If this cafeteria has to close there would be no place in which the colored students could eat,” Dr. Lindley further

³⁸ Marcet Haldeman-Julius to “Mr. James Weldon Johnson.” October 12, 1927. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Pittsburg State University, Folder 90.

³⁹ Marcet Haldeman-Julius, “What the Negro Students in Kansas Endure” in *The Haldeman-Julius Monthly* 7 (1927): 7-8.

pointed out. “What would be better?” He takes the position – quite sincerely, I am sure – that he is obliged to choose between segregating the Negroes or eliminating them entirely from the cafeteria if it is to continue. He insists that the lack of segregation has always been a constant financial disadvantage ... The whole atmosphere of Lawrence is so prejudice-saturated that it may be true ... If it really will not pay without segregation then it should be closed until the atmosphere has become such that it can be opened under conditions that are equal to all the students ... A few weeks inconvenience would, I suspect, be quite enough.⁴⁰

At the base of Lindley’s argument for segregating the cafeteria, two central issues arise.

First, he remains committed to those elements of “capitalistic control” to which he alluded in his earlier letter to Marcet, using economics as a buffer for criticism and simultaneously a cipher for making KU’s institutional racism seem innocuous.

Analogizing racism through economics protected Lindley’s his policies from external pressure, buttressing them with monetary constraints and serve as justifications for further such policies. Secondly, and perhaps even more disturbingly, Lindley’s attitude asserted that because the Lawrence community is racist, that the college must be as well, must, as he often articulated, keep the community happy. This reasoning was, for Marcet, most logically circular and morally pernicious.

Taking Lindley’s assumption to task, Marcet asserted that “it is the consensus of opinion that it is only because of the [prejudice of the] Lawrence people that the Negro students at the University must be humiliated.”⁴¹ As a publisher, author, radical socialist, post-liberal feminist, and mother of a KU student (her son Henry attended the University) Marcet burned at the debilitating treatment of African Americans there. “Kansas University,” she explained,

⁴⁰ Haldeman-Julius, “Negro Students,” 11.

⁴¹ Haldeman-Julius, “Negro Students,” 15.

truckles shamelessly to the prejudices of the people of Lawrence Many counties, you should realize, have one or two such towns. There is no blinking the fact of this ... prejudice ... in our midst. Its activity is due in large part to the conflagration the Ku Klux Klan recently attempted to set ablaze.⁴²

In 1920s Kansas, economic agency and racial superiority were parallel tracks upon which ran the locomotive of white liberal social rule. As I showed in the previous section, even organized labor on the far left – consisting of the grown children of immigrants - was becoming more conservative and heeding the call for racial distinctiveness. The Klan represented for them some economic solvency, and thus, as in Lindley’s position, economics in Kansas both buffered racist strategies by creating lexicons of acceptability for them and lubricated pathways to further crimes against African Americans. The University of Kansas, the great bastion of learning on the plains, led by one of the country’s most preeminent scholars, was not immune to this subtle plague of racism articulated through the rhetoric of economic individualism and community responsibility. This subtle admission of racism on Lindley’s part is ironic and disconcerting because Lindley’s mentor was the famous pragmatist psychologist William James, a staunch supporter of pluralism.

In this case, Marcet and her socialist publishing mechanism served as the last line of defense against this subtle, economically defensible, racist ideology. Her socialist feminism allowed her the perspective and her publishing house allowed her the means to understand this insidious development and to write against it, to try and turn heads. Marcet understood that the fight for African American rights was a fight for human rights, and this she saw as a fight for the cause of socialism. For hers was a humanistic

⁴² Haldeman-Julius, “Negro Students,” 14.

socialism, and her primary desire was to establish and make plain the racist underpinnings of the economic system on which labor and higher education stood and under which blacks were trod. Marcet understood what would take the militant left more than a generation to articulate, that “the movement of the African American people for full social economic, and political equality” plays and has always played “a decisive role in the over all struggle for democracy and socialism.”⁴³ Marcet’s work against racism coincided with the fall of the KKK in Kansas in the late 1920s, but it did not facilitate that fall. Internal strife over money and violence did that, and Marcet’s inquiries and articles about the University of Kansas went a great distance in attracting attention to the situation at KU. In fact, riding the wave of criticism that began with Loren Miller’s article and then was taken up by Marcet, “[i]n 1930, Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois, the noted scholar, author, and editor ... wrote Chancellor Lindley to inquire about these criticisms of KU’s racial policies,” but even Du Bois’s power of mind did not sway the Lindley administration.⁴⁴

Though it facilitated Marcet’s detection of the connection between economics and racism in Kansas, her socialism took a back seat to liberal values like her aunt’s. Indeed, Jane Addams’s influence is, if anything, the defining narrative by which history should understand the radical transformation that Marcet Haldeman-Julius goes through. And with her Kansas campaign, Marcet’s complexity as a historical subject shows through. She wanted, first and foremost, to secure educational opportunities for African Americans in her home state, but she also wanted the more subtle prize of reclaiming some of the status that had been taken from her by the sexist editors of *The Independent*.

⁴³ Jarvis Tyner, Executive Vice Chair of the Communist Party USA in a speech entitled “The Struggle for African American Equality: Today’s Challenges” delivered in March, 2005.

Each woman's private feeling of victimization was disproven by playing the role of a savior for others. And in this, as well, Marcet reflects the process of Addams: both women served others, to some degree, out of a desire for, a need for, authority or a sense of place. While Addams's story is a story of social triumph, a story of her catapulting so many of the central values of the Progressive Era to the forefront while at the same time negotiating the careful strictures of a gendered world just rising from the strident paternalism of Victorian culture, Marcet's story is less triumphant but important for different reasons. Both women gain authority through service, through work. Indeed both Jane and Marcet "viewed work as a means of exertion and self expression, as a way of adding the spark of [their] own divinity to [a] universe" otherwise devoid of the divine; an entry into Addams's college journal sums up the two women's positions very well: a person will "never feel at home in the world save through labor; [s]he who does not labor is homeless."⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Tuttle, "Separate but Not Equal," 184.

⁴⁵ Bissell Brown. *Education*, p. 82.

Conclusion

Whether in her relationships, intellectual status, or public authorial persona, Marcet Haldeman-Julius was hardly representative. She stood out in her time and location largely because she never fully resolved herself within any particular ideological paradigm. She was a feminist, but her feminism was tempered with her experience of personal wounds and the privately enforced limitations of her marital relationship. She spoke out, but largely through the medium of her husband's editorial frameworks. Her socialism was qualified by her proclivities toward social liberalism and economic conservatism. Her pragmatism was extra-institutional and her philosophical dispositions were articulated as much through action as through texts.

Writing about Marcet's life is like tracing a moving figure which never quite stands still, never quite settles down into a pigeon hole, never fully *commits* to an ideological position, despite the fact that she held all her positions strongly. Her ability to grow and change made her a slippery biographical subject. It made it tough to trace linear development in her thinking. She was a rich country girl, a Broadway actress, a Republican bank owner, a radical socialist, a mother, a wife, a feminist, an author, a domestic slave, an advocate against racism in education, and an educator herself. Her unusual life was a complex equation to which, I admit, I never found the formula. She was at once representative and unique, exploited and privileged, mundane and masterful. This complexity of character and situation makes Marcet Haldeman-Julius a wonderful figure to research and explore.

As Glenda Gilmore explains, since historians begin their work at the close of a person's life or story, we lose too often "what made their subject's lives worth living: hope;" Gilmore proceeds:

A historian can rescue a woman from oblivion, painstakingly reconstruct her life and her ancestors' lives, and finally make modest claims for her experience, only to face the charge that if the subject is *that* interesting or important, then she must be unrepresentative This study operates from a different premise: that every story would be interesting if we could recapture it and that each one has something to teach us.¹

And thus is the case with Marcet Haldeman-Julius. She is both typical and atypical, but, for me, it is her struggle that holds the most value and makes her an important representative of the strong normative current rooted in Kansas's radical history. It is through that history we that hear the faint whisper, that dissonant voice echoing through a vast chorus of oppression.

Like any biography, this one is limited, but the work I have done should help underpin future research about Marcet, future research on women in socialism, radical women in the Midwest, the role of marriage in radical left movements, the relation between race and gender in the radical left at the beginning of the twentieth century, and larger question of the complicated relationship between liberal individualist notions of democratic agency and socialist notions of political change.

Marcet Haldeman-Julius's life was significant for reasons other than biographical voyeurism. She situated herself within the first generation of American philosophy through her relations with and reactions to Jane Addams and John Dewey. At the same time, she negotiated feminist values that seemed to herald the coming second wave of feminist thought, a cultural event that would remain unconsolidated for two generations

after Marcet's death. She combined pragmatic meliorism with the feminist belief in making the personal political. And her commitments did not stop there. Her polyvalent energy also took her to the question of race and the role and treatment of African Americans in the twentieth century. Marcet's feminist pragmatism was a cultural force devoid of abstraction, focused on concrete individuals and social situations, and set on the exertion of influence in the direction of social change. It is this imbrication of influences that helps to make her story so vivid and important for future scholars of history, feminism, pragmatism, and socialism.

¹ Glenda Gilmore. *Gender and Jim Crow*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996),1,4.

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