

# **“Moi seule” 1833: Feminist Subjectivity, Temporality, and Historical Interpretation**

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In 1833, a time abounding with combative pamphlets, a particularly explicit declaration made its appearance: “This first writing by a woman is but a gauntlet thrown into the arena, yet in the author’s quiver remains more than one arrow for defending the truth of her first writing.”<sup>1</sup> So reads the epigraph of a short brochure, published by its author and entitled *Appel d’une femme au peuple sur l’affranchissement de la femme* (Appeal of a woman of the people for the emancipation of woman). From what we know about the writer of this text and what remains of her work, she appears to be among those solitary figures whom Joan Wallach Scott has described as “neither typical . . . nor unique.”<sup>2</sup> We find them where brothers- and sisters-in-arms are challenged not only by the content or the mode of thought, speech, and action of their work, but by a political subjectivity that does not allow itself to be seamlessly integrated into the unified subjectivity presupposed, and, thereby, produced by social movements. This is particularly true for feminism: the fundamental historical importance of a unified subjectivity for the development of feminism was revealed most fully in the 1990s, when criticism of this unity led to what was perceived as a crisis of the movement.<sup>3</sup>

Among some historians of feminism, Judith Butler’s call to “take the construction of the subject as a political problematic” instead of presupposing this subject has become part of the program.<sup>4</sup> I, too, am concerned with the reconstruction of a subject position that is not given but constituted by words, gestures, and acts. In this context, however, I am interested in a dimension that appears to me to have been insufficiently addressed in the history of subjectivity as well as in the history of feminism: temporality. While the Foucauldian question of how forms of subjectivization have changed over time is, of course, at stake here, I would like to turn our attention to yet another aspect: the extent to which historically specific interpretations of temporal

situatedness operate in the constitution of subjectivity. In particular, I would like to consider how actors in nineteenth-century political movements derive their own subjectivity and that of others—as well as the truth claims related to those subjectivities—from their perception of temporal divergence, that is, from the perception of a differentiated being-in-time. As I will argue, historically specific temporal conceptions are operative here. That they mirror our own historiographic conceptions of time may, perhaps, explain why this dimension has attracted so little historiographical attention.

### Claire Démar

Little is known concerning the writer of the *Appel*. As an author, she is known as Claire Démar, but perhaps her name was Émilie d'Eymard. No image has survived, only a comrade's description from 1833: thirty-two years old (perhaps thirty-three or thirty-four), she was small and brunette, with handsome hands and feet, her face tired-looking but pleasantly regular, her physiognomy and gaze proud, indeed somewhat hard, her speech brusque and halting. An excess of passion was perceptible, but little tenderness.<sup>5</sup> It was conjectured that Démar belonged to the *demi-monde* before she ascended the barricades with the republicans during the July Revolution of 1830.<sup>6</sup> Disappointed, like many others, by the republicans' careless treatment of the “woman question,” she turned shortly thereafter to the version of utopian socialism advanced by the Saint-Simonians who, from 1831 on—and with deep ambivalence—had vocally proclaimed the “liberation of women” a central tenet of their political program.<sup>7</sup>

Démar's published work is just as sparse as the surviving information about her life: in the very same year, 1833, in which the *Appel* appeared, she composed a more extensive text with the title *Ma loi d'avenir* (My law of the future). This would be Démar's final work: by the time it appeared in 1834, she was dead. On August 8, 1833, she took her own life in a double suicide with the equally solitary Saint-Simonian Perret Desessarts.<sup>8</sup> This brought to an end, at least for the moment, what the historian Christine Planté has interpreted as her “daring to speak”: a seizing of the word in the arena of political debate and the sketching of future social orders.<sup>9</sup> “I respond,” Démar writes over and over again: “Me, woman, I will speak”; “I speak.”<sup>10</sup>

In the following, I would like to argue that this event—by which I mean the double gesture of Démar composing her second text and committing suicide right after that—has to be understood as a deliberate coupling of

opposed times. While ending her life, and thus stating her finitude, Démar opens up a future for the collective she addresses in her writing. For within the context of her suicidal gesture, her text—*My law of the future*—reads as “my” law that belongs to a future in which “I” am not. The *verité de l’auteur* announced in the epigraph of Démar’s first text hence reveals itself through her specific way of being-in-time, or, more precisely, being-in-times: it can only be proclaimed as such by this author who is outlived by it. Démar’s act of coupling times thus reveals both a divergence from and a convergence of times. It sets her apart as the one who knows the future that others don’t. The others have to be taught to recognize the future in the present—to understand time differently.

In what follows, I would like to elucidate this interpretation. I will try to show how Démar’s interpretation of political divergence in terms of divergent times brings forth her specific subject position as one that is able to let times converge. I will then address the conceptions of time that are set out in interpretations of Démar by her contemporaries and historians alike. With regard to this, I will speak of “anachronism” and “anachrony” as modes of interpretation of divergent times.<sup>11</sup>

### **Divergent Times and the Transitory Present of Utopia**

The historian Alice Primi has recently noted that the experience of inequality in the nineteenth century was, for feminists, also an experience of differing times: “By measuring progress with reference to Fourier, according to the degree of liberty afforded women, they made visible a gender-differentiated temporality: on the one hand, the political achievements of men and the material innovations that were likewise created and enjoyed by men; on the other, the immobility—indeed even the regression—of the social status of women.”<sup>12</sup> From this perspective, the unequal standing of women becomes a political anachronism, while human progress would mean the progressive accordance of women’s and men’s times.<sup>13</sup>

An experience of differing times is also documented in Démar’s writing; indeed, she captures the exclusion of many of those governed from governing through the concept of a time divided within itself: “our century itself [is] certainly nothing other than a long paradox.”<sup>14</sup> However, a decidedly republican—and, even more so, socialist-feminist—like Démar, who calls not only for the liberation of women, but for universal political participa-

tion and, additionally, for the abolition of property, sees the paradox of her century in a differentiated manner. Diverging temporality not only divides men and women but also divides men among themselves, since they too fall prey to what she calls the “*fantasmagorie parlementaire*” (parliamentary phantasmagoria), namely, the illusory character of political representation in the July Monarchy in France.<sup>15</sup>

However, when it is a matter, not of political participation, but of the actual foundation of an entire new society, which Démar locates in a new sexual morality, all find themselves in the same time—a transitory present. This shared social time overrides the divergence of times among groups insofar as the current sexual morality represses everyone indiscriminately. New morals will not only achieve the liberation of women but automatically bring with them the liberation of those men who are still oppressed. Accordingly, Démar addresses major and minor contradictions as follows: “Indeed, *the liberation of the proletarians, of the poorest and most numerous class, is only possible—I am convinced—through the liberation of our sex.*”<sup>16</sup> This claim of a common temporal space characterizes utopian thinking, which in the nineteenth century took the form of a sketch of the future of an entire society. Utopia was transformed from a “nonplace” into the “near or far future” of all, a future “towards which mankind inevitably approaches,” a program that strives to be realized “in every place” and encompasses the entire society.<sup>17</sup> Or, as Walter Benjamin—modifying a quotation from Jules Michelet—put it: “Every epoch, in fact, not only dreams the one to follow but, in dreaming, precipitates its awakening.”<sup>18</sup>

If the future is thus interpreted programmatically as utopian, then the present necessarily appears as a time of transition. But this means that the present carries with it the two other times of the political imaginary of the nineteenth century.<sup>19</sup> On the one hand, utopia’s present is filled with the expectation of the future. Already, Démar writes, “thrown into these times of destruction, of struggle, and of anarchy,” “we foresee” an “hour” that will come and “open a new era of social life,” that will bring an “order of better things.”<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, the present appears as if buried by the past and so contains elements that are not worthy of having a future: “Where is the world going?” asked Suzanne Voilquin, the editor of Démar’s writings and herself a feminist Saint-Simonian: “What will it do with all the rubble of the past to which it is attached with so much force?”<sup>21</sup>

As the point of intersection between an obsolete, but still lingering, past and an expected, but not yet initiated future (and, accordingly, as the point of

intersection between critique and imagination), utopian thought perceives the present as “historical”: it designates a point in time between a before and an after, and this temporal context bestows meaning upon it. Such a representation of the present fulfills the formal definition of the historical in terms of modern historiography as Georg Simmel has formulated it: namely, the convergence of chronological coordination with the interpretation based upon that coordination.<sup>22</sup> But there is a contradiction in modern utopian thought’s conception of time since it is not history that gives value to the present of utopia; instead, its measure is that of a timeless “nature.” The utopias of the early social movements are not conceived of as the results of historical development, but as the realization of a potential that is always already present—in other words, as Voilquin formulated it, as the realization of the “real demands of nature,” which have always been there.<sup>23</sup> In Démar’s writings, too, it is an invariable but still unrecognized “nature” that organizes the perfect social order: namely, the law of fundamentally volatile and imponderable human feeling. I will return to this point.

Hence, according to the many increasingly eschatologically oriented groupings of utopian socialists, a better society to come was rather a matter of sudden salvation than of a historical process. In Saint-Simonianism, it was the announced appearance of the idealized *femme-messie*, the female messiah, who—together with the actual leader of the movement, Prosper Enfantin, called “Père”—would lead humanity into the “new era.” As is well-known, this theory of the *femme-messie*—and the mystical heightening of Saint-Simonian rhetoric linked to it—were accompanied by the increasing exclusion of women from the movement, to which women reacted by organizing themselves and, in particular, by founding their own journals.

### **Divergence/Convergence of Individual and Collective Time**

Démar, too, believed in the *femme-messie*. “No, I do not doubt—I have never doubted—providence and its means, but I doubt us, poor women, who believe ourselves strong but—weak, timid, and Christian—will perhaps remain mute and insensible to the call of the REDEMPTRESS and would perhaps renounce her promise today because her actions would terrify us.”<sup>24</sup> Démar addresses these lines to the authors of the Saint-Simonian women’s newspaper *Tribune des femmes*, whom she reproaches for not going far enough in matters of sexual morality and love. But she thereby lays bare a fundamental

pitfall of the utopian expectation for the future which was caught up in the contradiction between a present perceived both in terms of historical process and in terms of timelessness: if not even the women of the political avant-garde can recognize the entrance of the future in the present, because they stop before precisely that which is revolutionary, that is, always already there but not yet realized, who can? The point in time for which everyone waits, according to Démar’s bleak suspicion, will go unrecognized because it confronts the present with that which is radically new and therefore its “other”: “I say that we have to listen with respect and devotion, without the possibility of judgment or blame, every emancipatory speech that resounds, so strange, so unheard-of, I would say, even, be it as revolting as it may. —I go further,—I maintain that the speech of the REDEMPTRESS WILL BE A SUPREMELY REVOLTING SPEECH” (*une parole souverainement révoltante*).<sup>25</sup>

In this passage, Démar deliberately teases out the double meaning of “*révoltante*”: it means at once “that which revolutionizes” (what her Saint-Simonian readers long for) and also “that which disgusts” (what those living in the present reject). Here lies the challenge of revolution, for that which disgusts is not easily welcomed as the longed-for revolution it actually is.

At first glance, Démar’s defense of revolution as being justified even as it—necessarily—disgusts her contemporaries could be read as a defense of her own design for a “new era” to which her audience responded with revolt and even revulsion. Indeed, Démar’s views were extreme, even within the context of the fundamentally transgressive political movements of the 1830s and 1840s; they were, as Planté writes, “extreme and singular.”<sup>26</sup> The core of social revolution carried out by way of an upheaval in sexual mores lay, according to Démar, not only in the recognition of the absolute freedom of amorous feeling from all conventions and interests, something demanded by many utopian-socialist feminists. Of more importance, for Démar, was the recognition of the necessity of making a “test” (*essai*) of this feeling “in the material, in the flesh.”<sup>27</sup>

Démar grounds this postulate in her own experience of failure using a tone of disturbing intimacy: “It is *I who speak*, who has rested *voluntarily*, only for an hour, in the arms of a man, and *this hour* erected a barrier of satiety between him and me, and this hour. . . was long enough to allow him to recede once again in my eyes into the monotone indifferent mass, and he once again became to me one of those entities who leave no trace in our lives other than a communal memory, cold and banal, without worth or

pleasure, without regret.”<sup>28</sup> “Without regret” is decisive, for this is the point: the feeling sometimes does not stand up to bodily testing, but nevertheless, both emotional and corporeal engagement were justified.<sup>29</sup>

Only in such an amorous praxis does Démar see human nature recognized as that which it is—volatile. From this she derives a right to secrecy in matters of love—which unmask marriage as an obscene public declaration of amorous relations. The amorous secret culminates—*Ma loi d’avenir* moves towards its climax here—in the abolition of paternal filiation. And this is not enough, for the text concludes with a call to end maternal filiation as well, indeed even motherhood: “against the law of blood, the law of generation,” “no more paternity,” “no more maternity.”<sup>30</sup>

These contours of a future era were in fact *révoltantes*. But it would be a mistake to take Démar’s defense of revolution’s revolting character to be nothing but a justification of her radical stance in matters of love and social organization. Rather, what plays out in her argument about a present that is not able to recognize—and accept—the revolution is the immediacy of the experience of temporal divergence that motivates her attempt to combine finitude and future in the writing of *Ma loi d’avenir* and committing suicide. In Démar’s writings the “we” of those inhabiting the present and longing for a better future is never the one that can recognize this future. Whenever the future is envisaged and, indeed, the “revolting speech” is spoken, the “we” transforms itself into a solitary “I.” “I will speak, I who—alone, without the support, without the encouragement, without the acclamation of any woman—already appealed to the people.”<sup>31</sup> Hence, it is “my” law of the future that captures the new social order—and not: “the” law of the future. This “I” is alone in a present in which “the hour has not arrived, the world is not ready—and we shall fight for a long time to come in this pestilent atmosphere of the Christian moral law, which suffocates us; for a long time to come, our wishes, words, and deeds will collide with one another confusedly in the dark of this night, in this chaos of thought.”<sup>32</sup> Within the shared time of a transitional utopian present, a divergence between the “I” and the “we” thus opens up.

The temporal divergence that organizes Démar’s discourse separates the individual time of a woman who understands herself as avant-garde from the time of the collective to which she belongs. Both times co-occur in a transitory present constituted out of expectations for a future (which the “I” knows) and out of ruins of the past (in which the “we” lives). But both are different from one another in this present insofar as it bears the promise (as

expectation) but cannot realize it: “Where is it [the hour]?” writes Démar: “When will it come?” It is this divide between her personal and collective time which is expressed in Démar’s “*moi seule*” as a foundational moment of her subjectivity: she speaks and acts from this place of being-alone, temporally separated from the “we.”

Démar overcomes this divide in the truth claim of her revolutionary being, which, on the one hand, is founded in the divergence between the “I” and the “we” but, on the other, is destined to close the gap. In death, she sublimes the divergence of times (in a double sense: she abolishes and preserves it). Precisely as a gesture of finitude that sets an end to individual time, death is capable of leaving a lasting legacy to nonfinite collective time: as in a testamentary act, Démar seals the manuscript of *Ma loi d’avenir* and furnishes it with the decree that its contents should be read aloud at the next meeting of the Saint-Simonians and then handed to Prosper Enfantin.<sup>33</sup> “There is something,” Démar writes in her farewell letter, “that is more important than individual wishes, private promises; we can neither deny nor misconstrue this other, stronger will.”<sup>34</sup> In this subjective significance of social progress, that is, the need to instantiate revolution, the individual finitude of biographical time and the collective future of historical time coincide. Under the seal of the manuscript/death—that is, in the sacrifice of suicide that makes possible the speaking out and being heard of the “revolting speech”—the experience of temporal divergence is reconciled: by setting herself an end, Démar bequeaths her truth about the future to a collective that, as much as it is bound to the past, will continue to exist.<sup>35</sup>

We may surmise that this gesture was understood, for it not only accords with the years of the Saint-Simonian *utopie-spectacle*, but also corresponds to the staging of the death of political figures in post-Revolutionary France.<sup>36</sup> As Emmanuel Fureix has shown, this was celebrated as a political event and as the point of intersection of “collective experience” with the “horizon of expectation,” as a “passage” towards the “promise of a better tomorrow.”<sup>37</sup> If, in the case of “great men,” burial festivities marked the passage to a better future, for Démar it was the reading of the manuscript, prescribed in her testament.

### **Anachronism, Anachrony, and Subjectivity**

I have, in the case of Claire Démar, engaged in reflections on a specific experience of being-and-acting-in-time brought forth by an interpretation of subjectivity in temporal terms. In the final part of my essay, I would like



to counterpose my argument with historical interpretations of Démar and, in particular, with the concepts of “anachronism” and “anachrony” as two modes of interpreting divergent times and heterogeneous temporality.

Historical interpretations of Démar commenced immediately after her death. Voilquin did not introduce the posthumous edition of *Ma loi d'avenir* with a foreword but with a “Notice historique.” In it, sources are cited (the farewell letters of Démar and Desessarts); the protagonist and the events are depicted and interpreted. As does Démar herself, Voilquin notes a difference between the “I” of the deceased, who had “no smile for our hope for the future and [could] see in FAITH nothing other than a kind of deceptive image, a fatal illusion,” and the “we” of her contemporaries who “must unite our endeavors and heighten our ardor, in order to work together for the realization of *our new world*.”<sup>38</sup> Voilquin also adopts the interpretation of this divergence as temporal when she reads Démar’s writings as documents of “her thinking of the future” and Démar herself as a “passionate soul” who could not have been pleased by “this slow march” of a “reform” of small steps.<sup>39</sup> Yet, this difference between the “I” and the “we” remains unreconciled for Voilquin and even leads to a banishing of Démar from her time: the present was too slow for Démar, or she was “too quick”—her suicide thus appears as a confirmation of her failure to exist in a way that accords with her time.

This interpretation entered into historiography. In works on Saint-Simonianism, one repeatedly finds the allusion to as well as the explicit statement that Démar killed herself “out of impatience.”<sup>40</sup> The interpretation of the historical phenomenon “Claire Démar” in the mode of a “too soon” operates in the manner of what Reinhart Koselleck calls “historico-temporal concepts” (*geschichtszeitliche Begriffe*): acceleration, delay, stagnation, regressions, the “too early” or the “too late,” the “not yet” and the “no longer.”<sup>41</sup> These conceptual terms—and thus interpretations of the past—are, according to Koselleck, specifically modern. Unlike interpretations of the past, in terms of cosmological orders or plans of divine salvation, they explain that which has happened by locating it in time and temporal movements.

Such a conception of the historical as oriented around movements in time (not necessarily conceived of as linear) may appear self-evident to the modern mind that engages scientifically with the past. But it is not: Siegfried Kracauer, for instance, considers it to be problematic whenever it organizes historical explanation per se—in other words, whenever historical explanation is inferred on the basis of temporal sequences and thus

always already determined by the repertoire of historico-temporal concepts. That is precisely what happens in Voilquin’s “Notice historique” according to which Démar could not survive *because* she was an anticipation, that is, *because* she represented something that was still to come. From Kracauer’s perspective, such a historical explanation commits a category mistake by turning chronology into matter and form into content.<sup>42</sup>

In the notion of the “too quick”—and of the “too early” reflected within it—it is, however, not only the historical phenomenon “Démar” that is interpreted. In the claim that a person does not belong to a given time, the historical moment itself is homogenized and its contemporaries staged as a homogeneous temporal community. Furthermore, the construction of past temporal communities brings forth present ones, for only the closure of a past temporal space makes possible the determination of the present as differing from it. In the service of precisely such a necessity—not to interpret the past but the present—Voilquin needed a Claire Démar who was untimely, who was “too quick”: in order to renew the hope—within a present that seemed to change only laboriously and not without regressions—it was precisely this slowness that was timely and a measure that things were going in their due course towards progress. To be a contemporary thus meant, for Voilquin, to “assimilate [my] words to progress as I found it in my environment.”<sup>43</sup> Her being in accordance with her time authenticates her political stance, while her political stance, for its part, authenticates her time as being on track. In the same sense, Démar’s challenge to this time—as falling short of its revolutionary potential by not letting the future occur in the present—can be neutralized by denying that she belongs to the very same time.

Jacques Rancière has criticized such a homogenization of temporal space—or “epochs”—as the *modus operandi* of the “concept of anachronism”: wherever someone or something is claimed to be anachronistic in the sense of “too early” or “too late,” it is presupposed that a temporal space displays a measure of homogeneity capable of defining persons and phenomena as not belonging to it. Voilquin proceeds in this very way when she negates Démar’s contemporaneity. Rancière identifies this thinking in terms of homogeneous epochs as the expression of a specifically modern historiographical truth production: by stating that phenomena are not simply “not given” but are quasi-lawfully “impossible” whenever they do not accord with “their” epoch, the writing of history secures its scientificity. According to Rancière’s critique, in this nomothetical concept of the epoch, historical

thought is perverted: by operating according to the assumption of homogeneous epochs or of a “pure present,” it contains within itself the opposite of historicity. It cannot conceive of change.<sup>44</sup> For Rancière, change is only possible when subjects act “against their time”—which means against the structures of their societies. He grasps such agency in terms of “anachrony”: “events, concepts, meanings acting against their time, which allow sense to circulate in a manner that escapes every cotemporality, every identity of a time with ‘itself.’”<sup>45</sup>

While Voilquin perceived Démar as an “anachronism”—as not belonging to the present, as being too early for her epoch, too quick in moving through time—Démar herself sees her through the mode of “anachrony”: speaking the “revolting speech” she went necessarily against her time—to which she nevertheless belonged—because she fulfilled a timely necessity. By willing her thought of the future to the present through the sacrifice of suicide, she insisted upon the timeliness of her revolting being. It was precisely her revolt that, as something futural, was contemporary with a present that wished to overcome destruction and darkness. In this very copresence of divergent times, Démar constituted herself as a truth-speaking subject: there could only be a Claire Démar because she belonged to a time with which she did not correspond.

“Anachronism” and “anachrony” were modes of constructing experience in temporal terms in a century so obsessed with the nexus of past, present, and future—this is what I have tried to show with these remarks. As a marginal note, but motivated by this argument, I would like to pose the question of whether it makes sense to use them as analytic categories of historical interpretation. Rancière has performed the corresponding critique in the case of “anachronism.” However, his alternative of “anachrony” remains bound to the very same idea of unified temporal spaces he criticizes, since a “counter-time” (ana-chrony) can only be spoken of when there is something that so dominates a temporal space that it is capable of defining this space. Thus “anachrony” breaks only half-heartedly with the concept of self-contained epochs, which are now more permeable but still determined in the mode of unity and deviation. Kracauer’s distinction between “formal,” or “measurable time” that alone defines a temporal space and the “bundles of shaped times in which the . . . series of events develops” seems to me at once more radical and more empirically open in its critique.<sup>46</sup> In a given temporal space, events—each of which has its own temporality—could be

only formally simultaneous, but could at once, on this very ground, connect with one another—raising the always empirical question under what conditions and in which constellations this occurs.

## Conclusion

At the beginning of this article, I suggested that we should not only ask about epochal forms of subjectivation but also about whether and how historically specific interpretations of being-in-time enter into the formation of subjectivity. In this regard, it seems to me particularly profitable to ask about the interpretation of copresent, but diverging, times in their significance for the constitution of the subject. The question can thus be posed whether, in Démar’s writing and acting, one temporal experience essential for the nineteenth century comes to expression: it could be that it is precisely the interpretation of the present through concepts of temporal divergence and the necessity of situating oneself with regard to them, as well as reacting to them, that found a heterogenous, temporal community of the nineteenth century. Claire Démar would then be a paradigmatic contemporary of the year 1833, for this would be the temporal space out of which her gestures (manuscript/suicide) arose as an attempt to let the divergent temporalities of biographical finitude and social future come together through the legacy of *Ma loi d’avenir*. Which different subjectivities were produced within this historical context would remain an open question. But this also demands a metahistorical reflection upon our own historiographical conceptions of time—which, admittedly, is not more than an all-too-often forgotten triviality.

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## Notes

1. Claire Démar, *Appel d’une femme au peuple sur l’affranchissement de la femme* (1833).
2. Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (1996), 15.
3. Seyla Benhabib, Judith Butler, Drucilla Cornell, and Nancy Fraser, eds., *Feminist Contentions: A Philosophical Exchange* (1995).

4. Judith Butler, "Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of 'Post-modernism'" in Benhabib et al., *Contentions*, 48–49.

5. Suzanne Voilquin, "Notice historique," in Claire Démar, *Ma loi d'avenir: Ouvrage posthume, publié par Suzanne* (1834), 13–14. In his passage on Claire Démar, the journalist Firmin Maillard copies Voilquin's description, at times literally and without acknowledgment. See his *La légende de la femme émancipée: histoires de femmes, pour servir à l'histoire contemporaine* (1886), 84–85. It is probably through Maillard's book that Walter Benjamin, who dedicates several lines in the *Arcades Project* to Démar, learned of her; see Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (1999), 809–10.

6. For this biographical conjecture, see Christine Planté, "La parole souverainement révoltante de Claire Démar," in *Femmes dans la cité, 1815–1871*, ed. Alain Corbin, Jacqueline Lalouette, and Michèle Riot-Sarcey (1997), 483.

7. See Démar, *Appel*, 9–10, for her critique of the republicans.

8. Hardly anything is known about Perret Desessarts. It is sometimes suggested that he was Démar's lover. However, it seems to me that a close reading of their farewell letters, both published in the posthumous edition of Démar's *Loi*, allows for this as well as for other interpretations. More interesting, in any case, is how they both describe their common suicide as an act of comrades travelling the same route.

9. On the *Oser parler*, see Planté, "Parole."

10. See, for instance, Démar, *Loi*, 37.

11. I borrow the concept of "divergent times" from Siegfried Kracauer, *History: The Last Things Before the Last*, ed. and trans. Paul Oskar Kristeller (1995), 140.

12. Alice Primi, "'Explorer la domaine de l'histoire': Comment les 'féministes' du Second Empire conçoivent-elles le passé?," *Revue d'histoire du XIXe siècle* 25 (2002): 121–26, <http://rh19.revues.org/index426.html>.

13. Primi, "Explorer," 5. This interpretation of a temporal space divided along gender difference was initially adopted by women's history as a historical interpretation. In speaking of "delayed democratization," inequality was interpreted as an anachronism. Later authors have corrected this appropriation of historical experience for historical interpretation by arguing that inequality in "modern societies" had to be refounded on new terms and thus cannot be understood as the continued existence of something identical in terms of "remains of the past."

14. Démar, *Loi*, 41.

15. Démar, *Appel*, 16.

16. Démar, *Loi*, 25.

17. Antoine Picon, *Les Saint-Simoniens: Raison, imaginaire et utopie* (2002), 25; Michèle Riot-Sarcey, *Le réel de l'utopie: Essai sur le politique au XIXe siècle* (1998); Lucian Hölscher, "Utopie," in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprachen in Deutschland*, ed. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck (1972–97), 6:733–88.

18. Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 13.

19. For the three times of the "imaginaire du temps politique" (past in the present, ritualized present, expected future), see Emmanuel Fureix, "Présent, passé, futur:

la mort et le temps politique (1820–1830),” *Revue d’histoire du XIXe siècle* 25 (2002): 155–63.

20. Démar, *Loi*, 25 and 26.

21. Voilquin, “Notice,” 6.

22. For this characterization of the historical, see Georg Simmel, “The Problem of Historical Time,” in *Essays on Interpretation in Social Science*, trans. Guy Oakes (1979), 127–44.

23. Voilquin, “Notice,” 5.

24. Démar, *Loi*, 27.

25. Démar, *Loi*, 27–28; quotation on 28.

26. Planté, “Parole,” 482.

27. Démar, *Loi*, 37. Important here is the concept of the *essai*, which draws a boundary separating this theory of love from libertinage and emphasizes its seriousness.

28. *Ibid.*

29. Walter Benjamin would not read these lines, as others did, as an indication of Démar’s demi-mondain past, but as evidence of an “anthropological materialism.” Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 809–10.

30. See Démar, *Loi*: “contre la loi du sang, la loi de génération” (55), “plus de paternité,” “plus de maternité, plus de loi du sang” (38). See also 38 on the postulate of a social—that is, a socialized and professional—maternity.

31. Démar, *Loi*, 24: “Je parlerai, moi, qui déjà seule, sans le soutien, sans l’encouragement, sans l’acclamation d’aucune femme, en ai déjà appelé au peuple.”

32. Démar, *Loi*, 26.

33. Voilquin, “Notice,” 12. This will was, according to Voilquin, executed—the manuscript was read to the “famille Saint-Simonienne de Paris.” However, *Enfantin*—not surprisingly—did not consider the legacy as his concern; a couple of days later, he passed the manuscript on to Suzanne Voilquin, letting her know that it “seems to be addressed more particularly to the *Tribune des Femmes*.” See Voilquin, “Notice,” 12–13.

34. Farewell letter in Démar, *Loi*, 8.

35. An echo of the temporal meaning of this act can also be found in Voilquin’s “Notice.” She writes that if she, as editor, were accused of immorality as the author had been, she would gladly accept the charge: “What of it! I am ready; I give my whole life to the present and my memory to the future,” “Notice,” 7.

36. For the years 1823–33 as years of the *utopie-spectacle* in Saint-Simonianism, see Antoine Picon, “L’utopie-spectacle d’Enfantin: De la retraite de Ménilmontant au procès et à l’année de la Mère,” in *Le siècle des saint-simoniens: Du “Nouveau christianisme” au canal de Suez*, ed. Nathalie Coilly and Philippe Régner (2007), 68–76.

37. See Fureix, “Présent, passé, futur,” as well as his *La France des larmes: Deuils politiques à l’âge romantique (1814–1840)* (2009).

38. Voilquin, “Notice,” 7 and 8. For the aspect of engineering in Saint-Simonianism—for instance, in its engagement with public works—as well as for Saint-Simonianism as one of the first movements in France to formulate a philosophy of

history as constant historical evolution, see Michèle Riot-Sarcey, "L'affirmation d'une doctrine et l'organisation d'une religion alternative," in *Le siècle des Saint-Simoniens*, ed. Coilly and Régnier, 47.

39. Voilquin, "Notice," 7 and 15.

40. See, for instance, the notice in the exhibition catalogue, *Le siècle des Saint-Simoniens*, ed. Coilly and Régnier, 99.

41. See Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (2004), 103–104. For the concepts of historical movement, see 95.

42. Kracauer, *History*, 139–63.

43. Voilquin, "Notice," 15.

44. See Jacques Rancière, "Le concept d'anachronisme et la vérité de l'historien," *L'inactuel* 6 (1996): 53–68. This discussion about the concept of anachronism is treated with some more depth in Caroline Arni, "Zeitlichkeit, Anachronismus und Anachronien. Gegenwart und Transformationen der Geschlechtergeschichte aus geschichtstheoretischer Perspektive," *L'Homme: Europäische Zeitschrift für Feministische Geschichtswissenschaft* 18 (2007): 53–76.

45. Rancière, "Concept," 67.

46. Kracauer, *History*, 145.