Habermas sans culottes

by

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Abstract

In this thesis I formulate a critique of Habermas's reading of the French Revolution in his book on the *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, in order to argue that the emergence of the public sphere of the French Revolution cannot be limited to written and oral speech, but that it also included material culture such as clothing and its symbolical weight in public debate, as in the case of the sans-culottes. The first part of my thesis explores Arendt's understanding of the public sphere as a "space of appearance," as it relates to material culture and to her allusion to the sans-culottes, to show the theoretical limitations of Habermas's rationalistic insistence on oral and written speech. The second part analyzes Habermas's treatement of clothing as a public manifestation in the Middle Ages, which leads to the third part where I examine how Habermas missed the importance of clothing in the public "space of appearance" of the French Revolution and how the sans-culottes exemplified the public significance of clothing. The fourth part takes the example of the sans-culottes's red cap and argues that considering this republican piece of clothing of Roman origin reveals how, in light of Arendt, tradition and modernity stood right beside each other in the French Revolution, which corresponds to a historical reality avoided by Habermas due to his insistence on the modernity of the Enlightenment.

Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the student, Richard LeBlanc.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Habermas sans culottes

Introduction

The title of this thesis is half German, half French. The German part corresponds to the name of a well-known German contemporary social and political philosopher. The French part contains two words: "sans" and "culotte," which could be translated respectively as "without" and "breeches," or "pants," in Canadian French. Read literally the title thus says: "Jürgen Habermas, or the German contemporary philosopher, without pants." In this phrase, I would like to emphasize two things. On the one hand, the philosophical style of German philosophy as endorsed by Habermas. On the other hand, the concreteness of daily situations which involve clothing such as "pants." My goal is to link these two elements by posing the question of whether Habermas wears pants when he elaborates his philosophical thought. This question is relevant in that Habermas's treatment of the public sphere in his *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* delves into a series of issues without mentioning that he is speaking from a privileged position where his pants do not pose any problem. It seems to me that the notion of pants is not talked of in Habermas's book especially because he chooses to examine what makes sense to many intellectuals: books, language, knowledge, erudition, prestigious authors, etc.

For instance, Habermas's book talks about the French Revolution as if the French were doing the revolution from their office at the university, writing speeches and taking them back to the assembly, without worrying about which pants they were wearing while having all these thoughts about freedom. He writes as if the French did the revolution isolated from the material world at the library between two meals, in small groups of academic elites, in a French Frankfurt. What Arendt describes as the "professional revolutionist," arising from the events of the "French Revolution," whose "essentially theoretical way of life was spent in the famous

libraries of London and Paris, or in the coffee houses of Vienna and Zurich, or in the relatively comfortable and undisturbed jails of the various *anciens régimes*," who "enjoyed special privileges since his way of life demanded no specific work whatsoever," and suddenly appearing in revolutionary politics with "the great advantage" of "the professional revolutionists" whose "names are the only ones which are publicly known,"[1] presents a similarity with Habermas: although Habermas did not become a "professional revolutionist," he still had enough space in his schedule[2] to go to the "library" and to become a "publically known" author without paying much attention to what it means to wear these or those pants.

The French in 1789 onwards were certainly closer to the question of pants in the public sphere of their revolution since one of their political movements was specifically called "sans-culottes." However, I chose to remove the hyphen between "sans" and "culotte" in my title in order to single out the fact that Habermas speaks as if he literally did not wear pants, as if he was literally "sans culottes" or "without pants," that is, as if the question of clothing was not worthy of consideration for understanding the public sphere in modern history. My title is thus a satirical ad hominem provocation, inspired by the sans-culotte behavior as described by historians. It is my own way of protesting, from within a certain French tradition of political opposition, and that in a certain way is reminiscent of Pierre Bourdieu, to Habermas's choice of accounting for the past only from the point of view of the privileged class(es) to which he belongs. It is also a way of stressing how important it is for academic researchers, such as myself, to consider the privileged position from which we speak, instead of focussing strictly on

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[1] Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, Introduction by Jonathan Schell, New York, Penguin Books, [1963] 2006, p. 251-252, italics in the text, Arendt's account is more nuanced, but I only draw from the formulas quoted.

[2] In Jürgen Habermas, "On the German-Jewish Heritage," in *Telos*, June 20, vol. 1980, no. 40, p. 127, Habermas himself says that he was "brought up in the context of the postwar German university and in the tradition of German philosophy," although this could invoke various things, it still points in the direction of what I try to say here.

the canonical authors, as if the past was made up of them only, or as if only the "important people" were "important."

This thesis looks into Habermas's *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* in order to formulate a critique of his interpretation of the emergence of the public sphere in the French Revolution. I argue that the publicity of the culture of clothing of the sans-culottes in the French Revolution was an important aspect of the event of the modern public sphere that Habermas missed due to his linguo-centrism and "bourgeois-centrism."[3] My claim will be that in order to understand what it means to talk about an issue such as the emergence of the public sphere in modernity, one has to take seriously into account the significance of clothing as it relates to the way human identities and political positions are articulated publically. If it is true to say about the modern epoch "that over all of western and central Europe a new 'curiosity about public affairs' spread not only among the 'intellectual elite' but also among the lower orders of the people,"[4] I aim to explain in this thesis how the study of sans-culotte clothing is a point of entry into the examination of the modern public sphere in its broader meaning, including these "lower orders of people."

First I examine the concept of the public sphere from the point of view of material culture. I demonstrate how Hannah Arendt's theory of the public sphere as a "space of appearance" is more suited to considering clothing as a public manifestation than Habermas's rationalistic public sphere which tends to avoid this issue. The second part of my development treats Habermas's account of the prehistory of the public sphere in the Middle Ages. I show that Habermas considers seriously the dress code of medieval aristocracies as representations of power and how this clothing element is what Habermas mistakenly leaves behind in the rest of

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[3] I use the expression "linguo-centrism" in order to avoid the term "logo-centrism." By "linguo-centrism," I refer to the oral and written aspect of language.

[4] Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 284, note 11, Arendt refers to "Wolfgang H. Kraus."

his book about the arrival of a specifically modern public sphere. The third section of the thesis examines the elements of the public sphere that Habermas fails to grasp by focusing on the oral and written perspective of language, such as literature and dialogic collaboration. I delve into concrete historical examples and explain how this choice made by Habermas disqualifies a series of highly significant material tools of political struggle that were used in the public sphere of the French Revolution, that is, the clothing culture of the sans-culottes. The fourth part of the thesis addresses Habermas's emphasis on the French Revolution as articulating a notion of a public sphere of oral and written debate that is breaking with the tradition. I take another significant historical case and show that this approach adopted by Habermas, an approach focused on oral and written language and on the break with tradition, prevented him from taking into account the Roman tradition represented in the "bonnet rouge" or red cap of the sans-culottes as a cardinal political symbol. Hannah Arendt's hermeneutic interpretation of the revolution is the main theoretical anchorage for my analysis of the red cap as a public instance of a traditional heritage at the core of revolutionary modernity.

Many scholars have addressed the question of clothing in the French Revolution. However, few have made the link between political theories of the public sphere in modernity and the historical situation of clothing in the revolution. Although studies by Jennifer Harris, Laura Auslander, James Leith, Michel Louve, and Michel Naudin, and Richard Wrigley address clothing during the French Revolution and certainly illuminate thereby the significance of the dress culture of the sans-culottes and other revolutionary movements as public manifestations of political debate, their account does not confront their historical findings with the conceptual work of political theory.[5] Even if Wrigley is the author who treats most thoroughly the historical

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[5] Jennifer Harris, "The Red Cap of Liberty: A Study of Dress Worn by French Revolutionary Partisans 1789-94," in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 3, Spring 1981, p. 283-312; Leora Auslander, "Regeneration Through the

question of clothing in the revolution, and whose research results I use most substantially, his

book does not address significantly the political concepts presupposed in the culture of clothing.

Other historians have also studied the movement of the sans-culottes, but many of them

underestimated the reference to clothing in the vocabulary the revolutionaries were using and its

relation to the public sphere theorized in political thought.[6] Benjamin Nathans mentions quickly

the pertinence of the question of clothing in French literary history in a discussion of Habermas's

political theory, but the issue is not explained.[7] Other critics of Habermas and cultural historians

make the argument that Habermas's "conception of the public sphere is too narrow," but the

question of clothing remains unexplored.[8] Hannah Arendt refers to the notion of clothing and

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Everyday? Clothing, Architecture and Furniture in Revolutionary Paris," in *Art History*, Vol. 28, No. 2, April 2005, p. 227-247; James Leith, "Images of Sans-culottes," in C. Hould and J. Leith (ed.), *Iconographie et image de la Révolution française*, Actes du colloque tenu dans le cadre du 59ième congrès de l'Association canadienne française pour l'avancement des sciences, (15-16 Mai 1989), Montréal, 1990, p. 131-159 (bibliographical information for this document taken from Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances. Representations of Dress in Revolutionary France*, Oxford-New York, Berg, 2002, p. 294); Michel Jouve, "L'image du sans-culotte dans la caricature politique anglaise. Création d'un stéréotype pictural," in *Gazette des beaux-arts*, 6ᵉ Période, Tome XCII, 120ᵉ Année, 1978, p. 187-196; Michel Naudin, "La réaction culturelle en l'an III : la représentation du Jacobin et du sans-culotte dans l'imaginaire de leur adversaire?," in Michel Vovelle (ed.), *Le tournant de l'an III. Réaction et terreur blanche dans la France révolutionnaire*, Paris, Comité des travaux historique et scientifiques, 1997, p. 279-291; Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances. Representations of Dress in Revolutionary France*, Oxford-New York, Berg, 2002.
[6] François Furet, Claude Mazauric and Louis Bergeron, "Les sans-culottes et la Révolution française," in *Annales, Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 18ᵉ Année, No. 6, Nov.-Dec., 1963, p. 1098-1127; Ruth Scurr, "Who Were the Sans-culottes?," in *Modern Intellectual History*, 8, 2, 2011, p. 447-455; Annie Geffroy, "Désignation, dénégation: la légende des *sans-culottes* (1780-1980)," in Christian Croisille et Jean Ehrard (actes recueillis et présentés par), avec la collaboration de Marie-Claude Chemin, *La légende de la révolution*, Actes du colloque international de Clermont-Ferrand (juin 1986), Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de l'Université Blaise-Pascal (Clermont II), 1988, p. 581-593; Michael Sonenscher mentions Habermas in his book on the sans-culottes, but he does not criticize his avoidance of clothing, Michael Sonenscher, *Sans-Culottes. An Eighteenth-Century Emblem in the French Revolution*, Princeton-Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2008, for the reference to Habermas, see p. 362.
[7] Benjamin Nathans, "Habermas's "Public Sphere" in the Era of the French Revolution," in *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 3, Spring, 1990, p. 620-644, for the reference to clothing, see, p. 641.
[8] Harold Mah, "Phantasies of the Public Sphere: Rethinking the Habermas of Historians," in *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 72, No. 1, New Work on the Old Regime and the French Revolution: A special Issue in Honor of François Furet, March 2000, p. 153-182, for the quotation, see p. 158; see also Jon Cowans, "Habermas and French History: the Public Sphere and the Problem of Political Legitimacy," in *French History*, Vol. 13, No. 2, p. 134-160; John L. Brooke, "Reason and Passion in the Public Sphere: Habermas and the Cultural Historians," in *The Jounral of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 29, No. 1, Summer 1998, p. 43-67, Brooke's article is a book-review essay on cultural history books (focussing on the United States) in which Habermas is used or discussed; Craig Calhoun, "Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, Cambridge (Mass.)-London, The MIT Press, 1992, p. 1-48, particularly p. 33, 38-39, 41, 43 note 11; Seyla Benhabib, "Models of Public Space: Hannah Arendt, the Liberal Tradition, and Jürgen Habermas," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 73-98, particularly p. 86, although, as Hohendahl remarks, Benhabib focuses more on "Habermas's later work," see Peter Uwe Hohendahl, "The Public Sphere: Models and Boundaries," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 100, Hohendahl underestimates

addresses theoretically the question of the public space of the revolution and its meaning, but the specific case of clothing is only alluded to and the sans-culottes are mentioned only briefly in *The Human Condition*.[9]

The goal of this thesis is to address this gap in the literature on the French Revolution and its relation to political theory and to suggest certain pathways of research and reflection. The first critical reaction to my thesis could obviously be that Habermas does not treat the sans-culottes simply because he undertakes to do an "Untersuchung zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft," as the subtitle of his book indicates, and not an investigation about the social classes outside the bourgeoisie of civil society. As critics point out, Habermas himself says explicitly that his theory "vernachlässigt die im geschichtlichen Prozeβ gleichsam unterdrückte Variante einer *plebejischen* Öffentlichkeit."[10] There is in Habermas's book an attempt to focus

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clothing when he criticizes Habermas's restrictive public sphere by emphasizing "the cultural sphere," p. 108; Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 115-142; Keith Michael Baker, "Defining the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century France: Variations on a Theme by Habermas," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p.181-211, mainly p. 191-192; David Zaret, "Religion, Science, and Printing in the Public Spheres in Seventeenth-Century England," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 212-235; see also on Zaret and Baker and a reference to Baker's emphasis on "popular culture" (p. 256), Lloyd Kramer, "Habermas, History, and Critical Theory," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 239-249; Mary P. Ryan talks about "symbols" in the public sphere from a feminist perspective, but clothing is ignored, see Mary P. Ryan, "Gender and Public Access: Women's Politics in Nineteenth-Century America," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 266, 270-271, 278, 284, etc; Geoff Eley also mentions the "wider domain of cultural activity" for the public sphere in England without referring to clothing, Geoff Eley, "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 300, see also p. 304-305 for an allusion to the French case, and for further criticism about the limits of Habermas's approach, see for instance p. 306, 321, 330-331; Harry C. Boyte, "The Pragmatic Ends of Popular Politics," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 341-342, 344; Michael Warner's emphasis on the body in his commentary on Habermas's idea of a public sphere does not explore clothing, see Michael Warner, "The Mass Public and the Mass Subject," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 377-401.
[9] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Second Edition, Introduction by Margaret Conovan, Chicago-London, The University of Chicago Press, [1958] 1998; Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future. Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, Introduction by Jerome Kohn, New York, Penguin Books, [1954] 2006; Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*; Craig Calhoun, "Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 5, refers to the link between Arendt and Habermas, but the issue of clothing is not mentioned.
[10] Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, Neuwied und Berlin, Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, [1962] 1975, S. 8, italics in the text; Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, translated by Thomas Burger, with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence, Cambridge (Mass.), The MIT Press, [1989] 1991, p. xviii; for the reference to this by critics, see Benjamin Nathans, "Habermas's "Public Sphere"," p.

on a specific group of people by avoiding a whole range of other groups active in modern history. This made many scholars interpret Habermas's move as an idealizing interpretation of historical reality.[11]

For Geoff Eley, Habermas's "model" of a public sphere can be seen as "an extremely idealized abstraction from the political cultures that actually took shape at the end of the eighteenth and start of the nineteenth centuries."[12] The distance between the tendency towards an ideal public sphere and towards the empirical ground on which Habermas's project in *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* relies, is pointed out by many other scholars. Craig Calhoun mentions Habermas's attempt to reach "a normative ideal,"[13] which recalls the difference between a research strictly based on empirical history and the conceptual aspirations of philosophical inquiry. Seyla Benhabib talks about "a *décalage*, a rupture, here between the normative model and the social analysis, which seems to be already implicit in the

641 and Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 138 note 8; Geoff Eley also refers to this passage by Habermas who "confines his discussion too much to the bourgeoisie," Geoff Eley, "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 303; see also Harry C. Boyte who says that "*Structural Transformation* sought to create a normative ideal of procedural radicalism in the service of democratic political critique," in Harry C. Boyte, "The Pragmatic Ends of Popular Politics," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 343 (italics in the text); Nicholas Garnham, "The Media and the Public Sphere," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 359: among the critics of Habermas some show "That he neglects the importance of the contemporaneous development of a plebeian public sphere alongside and in opposition to the bourgeois public sphere a sphere built upon different institutional forms," that "That he idealizes the bourgeois public sphere," and his "neglect of the link […] between citizenship and theatricality," although Garnham does not mention clothing in his summary of the critique of Habermas, and his reference to "the necessary material resource base for any public sphere" (p. 361) in Habermas still avoids the importance of clothing, even when mentioning "symbolic forms" (p. 362); see also Benjamin Lee, "Textuality, Mediation, and Public Discourse," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 415 and 417; see also the passage when Jürgen Habermas, "Concluding Remarks," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 466, admits that he did not consider "the exclusionary aspect of established public spheres."

[11] Habermas uses the word "idealization" when referring to criticism, see Jürgen Habermas, "Further Reflections on the Public Sphere," translated by Thomas Burger, in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 424, and in Jürgen Habermas, "Concluding Remarks," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 463.

[12] Geoff Eley, "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 307, Eley also talks about the "'plebeian public sphere'" in England but without the notion of clothing, p. 329.

[13] Craig Calhoun, "Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 39, see also p. 40.

Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit,"[14] and which is what Keith Michael Baker calls the "profound ambiguity built in Habermas's definition of the public sphere."[15] Others for instance discuss Habermas's idea of a public sphere as a "paradigm," and the work of "historians."[16] Habermas himself acknowledges that the German reception of his *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* highlighted the contradiction between "descriptive and normative aspects," and that he "was at least not careful enough in distinguishing between an ideal type and the very context from which it was constructed."[17] It is possible in this sense to evaluate Habermas's *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* by singling out the twofold orientation in his book that creates a divide between those who emphasize the theoretical project and others who insist on the concreteness of empirical findings in history.

As Habermas's work on the public sphere is contrasted by historians with new discoveries in historical research, it is worth citing David Zaret's illuminating comment where he says about *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* that "Critical commentary enjoys an unfair advantage when it is directed at historical and sociological scholarship published nearly thirty years ago."[18] This is an "unfair advantage" from which my argumentation on the sans-culottes clearly benefits. From this angle, Geoff Eley also mentions the "familiar historian's complaint that 'reality' was more

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[14] Seyla Benhabib, "Models of Public Space," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 87 (italics in the text).

[15] Keith Michael Baker, "Defining the Public Sphere," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 183.

[16] Lloyd Kramer, "Habermas, History, and Critical Theory," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 236-239; see also Stephen Leonard, "Concluding Remarks," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 470-471, about "the ideal" and "the empirical."

[17] Jürgen Habermas, "Concluding Remarks," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 462-463.

[18] David Zaret, "Religion, Science, and Printing," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 212; see also about this point in particular, Lloyd Kramer, "Habermas, History, and Critical Theory," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 238 and 249-257, and Geoff Eley, "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 292-293; also John L. Brooke, "Reason and Passion in the Public Sphere," p. 61, who refers to Habermas's text in Calhoun's book.

complicated than that (and too complicated for *any* theory to be adequate, it is often implied),"[19] a "complaint" Habermas recognizes as legitimate.[20] My project in this thesis certainly emphasizes this criticism coming from the empirically-minded researcher who looks for evidence in historical documentation when general statements about the past are made. Although I do not rely on primary historical documents but on the research done by historians and other scholars in many other disciplines in humanities and social sciences, I will follow this historical insight in order to widen the perspective from which we understand what happens in the public sphere, that is, in the public sphere that Habermas was fruitfully able to unearth after the wreckage of the first half of the twentieth century.[21]

One could also explain Habermas's treatment of the French Revolution by underscoring the fact that Habermas only talks about French history in a way that remains "relatively sketchy,"[22] which would explain his avoidance of the sans-culottes. Habermas underscores for instance the question of "whether the format or size of the theoretical frame of historical analysis is not too extensive."[23] Habermas seems to imply that "historical analysis" can lead to an infinite debate on historical details when the perspective is too broad and this would prevent a general understanding of the emergence of a modern public sphere. One could also say that "the preparation of the French *hommes de lettres* who were to make the Revolution was theoretical in

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[19] Geoff Eley, "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 307 (italics in the text), see also p. 310.

[20] Jürgen Habermas, "Further Reflections on the Public Sphere," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 423; see also Jürgen Habermas, "Concluding Remarks," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 471, where Habermas answers a question by saying "you are completely right to ask me why I am engaging in these abstract things, speech-act theory, moral theory, and whatever without entertaining a historically focused, straightforward analysis. And this I can take to heart."

[21] It is important to single out an outstanding merit of Habermas's book: Harry C. Boyte, "The Pragmatic Ends of Popular Politics," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public sphere*, p. 343: "Habermas's" "account is meant in a sense to prompt historical investigation. This it has certainly achieved," which could be applied to my thesis.

[22] Keith Michael Baker, "Defining the Public Sphere," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 189.

[23] Jürgen Habermas, "Concluding Remarks," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 465.

the extreme,"[24] as well as its reception,[25] and that this probably influenced Habermas's highly theoretical approach to history.   Nevertheless, as it has been done already but from a different perspective,[26] I will defend the idea that the historical reality of the public sphere during the French Revolution unveils a non-bourgeois group playing a fundamental role in part by means of its dress culture. Even if the sans-culottes did not coin the expression of the public sphere and did not attend the salons or literary circles of the bourgeoisie, they were not less important in the space of political debate opened in part by the modern bourgeoisie of the revolution.   My argumentation thus explores what it means to say like Bourdieu that Habermas "réduit les rapports de force politiques à des rapports de communication […], c'est-à-dire à des rapports de « dialogue »" understood in linguistic terms.[27]   Even if there was certainly an important component of communication and dialogue in the public sphere for the French Revolution where the sans-culottes participated,[28] the "symbolical powers," as Bourdieu would put it, that were being exercised by the sans-culottes through their symbolical clothing as well as through their impact on the discourse on clothing constitute an unavoidable reality in the history of the French public sphere.[29]

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[24] Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 111, italics in the text, see also p. 112-115.

[25] Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 212.

[26] See for instance Benjamin Nathans's remark in Benjamin Nathans, "Habermas's "Public Sphere"," p. 626: Habermas "relies on a Marxist framework of bourgeois-capitalist ascension, an interpretation that has suffered a massive assault in the years since the original publication of *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*" (italics in the text).

[27] Pierre Bourdieu, *Méditations pascaliennes*, édition revue et corrigée, Éditions du Seuil, [1997] 2003, p. 97-98, unlike Habermas, Bourdieu develops a "sociologie des rapports de pouvoir symbolique," see p. 98; see also Craig Calhoun, "Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 38, note 57, where Bourdieu is mentioned, although the *Méditations pascaliennes* and the notion of symbolical power are not; other critics of Habermas also focus too much on "rational-critical political discourse" in their definition of the "public sphere," see for instance Michael Schudson, "Was There Ever a Public Sphere? If So, When? Reflections on the American Case," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 143-163; Moishe Postone also missed the importance of symbolical power when criticizing Schudson, see Moishe Postone, "Political Theory and Historical Analysis," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 164-177.

[28] See about this Claude Mazauric in François Furet, Claude Mazauric and Louis Bergeron, "Les sans-culottes et la Révolution française," p. 1107-1108.

[29] When Lloyd Kramer, in "Habermas, History, and Critical Theory," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 241, says that historical criticism of Habermas's book are "attempts to expand the cultural

Habermas's mention of "art criticism" or "freedom of opinion" as part of the event of the modern public sphere of the French Revolution, in his response to the critique of his book, will thus be shown to be insufficient when the publicity of clothing in the symbolical realm of politics is accounted for.[30] Even his allusions to "the 'plebeian' public sphere" in the French Revolution, or to "the coexistence of competing public spheres" and to the "processes of communication that are excluded from the dominant public sphere," remain without any reference to examples such as the political and social symbolism of clothing for the sans-culottes.[31] Although Habermas writes about the contradiction between the "ideal type" and the "context" that "the real problem […] is something else," I will try to show why "the real problem" posed by the idea of a modern public sphere is, in my opinion, still intimately and importantly linked to material political symbols for a group such as the sans-culottes.

This problem that I wish to explore seems to have been pointed out by Habermas himself when he says:

> I think that a public sphere, in the sense in which I've tried to define it, only arose with the transformation of the split between high culture and popular culture that has been characteristic of premodern societies. A convenient or, in that sense, popular public sphere emerged only in competition with the literary public sphere of the late

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meaning of the early-modern European public sphere," these attempts are similar to my own enterprise here; for an example see Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 5 about the French Revolution: "the discourse of appearances, as it was registered through attention to dress, was a crucial element in the lived experience of the various institutions and practices which made up the Revolution's new political culture."

[30] For Habermas's allusion to "art criticism" in the French Revolution's public sphere, see Jürgen Habermas, "Further Reflections on the Public Sphere," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 424; allusions to "bodily expressive, elliptic, noisy discussions" is unexplained in Jürgen Habermas, "Concluding Remarks," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 472.

[31] For those quotations, see Jürgen Habermas, "Further Reflections on the Public Sphere," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 425, see also p. 426 where Habermas mentions the "pluralization of the public sphere," etc", and p. 427 where he talks quickly about Bakhtin and "the *inner* dynamics of a plebeian culture," (italics in the text), although clothing is not mentioned; Habermas also mentions "the necessity of taking into consideration cultural factors" such as "popular culture," but without any reference to the sans-culottes and the French Revolution, Jürgen Habermas, "Concluding Remarks," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 464.

eighteenth century; it can already b[e] observed in late-eighteenth-century France during the revolution.[32]

However, the *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* does not delve into these historical elements that would enable to include the significance of "popular culture" in politics during the French Revolution. The case of the sans-culottes and of the "plebeian" strata of French society is overlooked and leads to the avoidance of cultural symbols of public representation.

It should be mentioned that there are many issues that this paper will not be able to address. Habermas's own critical response in which he says that his "theory of communicative action" argues "in favor of an empirical approach in which the tension of the abstract opposition between norm and reality is dissolved,"[33] will not be part of my thesis since this theory comes later in Habermas's work and my focus is *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*. Other important questions such as the role of women or gender in the culture of clothing and in the revolution in general will not be part of my argument.[34] The notion of "historical agency" in the public sphere would be relevant to take into account but will not be brought forth.[35] The concept of the performativity of clothing in the public sphere is another theme that would be useful but that will not be explained.[36] It will not be possible either to examine the theoretical distinction between the modality of signification of speech and of clothing or of other types of non-linguistic

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[32] Jürgen Habermas, "Concluding Remarks," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 464-465.

[33] Jürgen Habermas, "Further Reflections on the Public Sphere," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 442-443, according to Habermas, his later work on "communicative action" is interested in "the relative structural autonomy and internal history of cultural systems of interpretation (p. 443), which would have been very relevant for my project.

[34] See for instance, Benjamin Nathans, "Habermas's "Public Sphere"," p. 634-636, although clothing is not addressed; see also on women and clothing, Jennifer Harris, "The Red Cap of Liberty," p. 293-298, and on clothing and gender, Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 246-249 among other sections.

[35] See for instance Harold Mah, "Phantasies of the Public Sphere," p. 160, 162-163, although clothing is not mentioned by Mah.

[36] Harold Mah, "Phantasies of the Public Sphere," p. 168, talks about "performances" in the public sphere but clothing is not mentioned.

expression in the public sphere.[37] There are also many types of clothing and conceptual specificities (uniform, dress, cloth, costume, etc.) that will not be accounted for, although these differentiations and specifications would have improved the level of understanding of the issue. The literature on the subject of the French Revolution as well as on Habermas's work is more than abundant and a reading of other studies would have widened the scope from which the issue is addressed.

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[37] For studies of non-linguistic (or less-linguistic or non-linguo-centric) types of expression, see Leora Auslander, "Regeneration Through the Everyday?," p. 227-247; Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*; James Leith, "Images of the *Sans-Culotte*," p. 131-159; Michel Jouve, "L'image du sans-culotte," p. 187-196; Jennifer Harris, "The Red Cap of Liberty," p. 283-312; Michel Naudin, "La réaction culturelle en l'an III," p. 279-291.

Habermas and Arendt: Clothing in the Public Sphere

In his book *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, Habermas begins his exploration of the concept of the "public sphere" by enumerating the many possibilities of meaning that the expression contains. He then explains what the notion of a "public sphere" meant in the context of ancient Greece. After his account, he writes that "Dieses Modell der hellenischen Öffentlichkeit, wie es uns mit der Selbstdeutung der Griechen stilisiert überliefert ist, teilt, seit der Renaissance, mit allem sogenannt Klassischen die eigentümlich normative Kraft – bis in unsere Tage."[38] This statement is followed by a footnote with a reference to Arendt's book entitled *The Human Condition*.[39]

The "normative power" of the Greek heritage for political thought is certainly perceptible in Arendt's book.[40] Habermas saw that Arendt uses Greek history to propose normatively a way of understanding what it means to have a public world for speech and action. He does the same type of normative historical research with modern history by singling out a bourgeois conception of a "public sphere."   Habermas seems to have been inspired by Arendt's analysis of the notion of the public sphere in other respects. For instance, in the last part of *The Human Condition*, Arendt links scientific societies in modernity to the situation of the political world. She then suggests that many aspects of the culture of modern scientific communities had an impact on the

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[38] Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, S. 16; Jürgen Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 4.

[39] Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, New Edition, Oxford, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, [2000] 2003, p. 199, writes about "Habermas" and "*The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*" that "Although the very first pages of his work reveal the centrality of Habermas's dialogue with Arendt, the complexity of their interchange and the magnitude of his intellectual debt to her have not been given their due" (italics in the text), see also for instance Benhabib's referene to the interesting parallel between Arendt's earlier work and Habermas's "*The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*" (italics in the text) on p. 33, note 33, and p. 20 where note 33 is indicated.

[40] However, although Habermas is right, it should be noted that Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, p 193-198, argues about Arendt that there is "a normative lacuna in her thought" (p. 193), and mentions on p. 209, "Arendt's work" and "the public" as "a norm and a principle," and refers on p. 166 to "*the normative core of the Arendtian conception of the political*" (italics in the text), etc; however, it will not be possible to address this issue in this thesis.

functioning of our modern and contemporary political communities. Habermas adopts a similar approach when he takes examples of literary associations in modernity, instead of strictly scientific ones, in order to explain the emergence of a modern public sphere. However, in spite of this parallel between Habermas and Arendt, the way both authors define the public sphere is different in a crucial way.[41]

Habermas focuses exclusively on the history of phenomena such as "ein Lesepublikum," "die Kritik eines räsonierenden Publikums," "Räsonnement," etc.[42] This development of critical thinking in literature, journalism, or commercial societies is what Habermas interprets as the elements that led to the modern public sphere.[43] In this sense, Habermas asserts that "Die politische Öffentlichkeit geht aus der literarischen hervor,"[44] which is a way of saying that "the world of letters" was extended to the field of politics.[45] There is a form of political rationalism in Habermas's theory of the public sphere, since it is in the public sphere that one can observe "das öffentliche Räsonnement."[46] The public sphere thus understood is conceived as a place

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[41] Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, p. 200: "whereas Arendt sees a decline of the public sphere under conditions of modernity, Habermas notes the emergence of a new form of publicity in the Enlightenment, that is, the public of private individuals reasoning together about public matters."

[42] Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, S. 38- 39; Jürgen Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 23-25.

[43] Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, p. 200: Habermas shows how in modern history "the public is increasingly formed through impersonal means of communication such as the printing press, newsletters, novels, and literary and scientific journals," although Benhabib is right in mentioning this, she did not emphasize enough that Habermas's understanding of the public sphere and written speech is also rooted in the rationalistic ideal of the Enlightenment; she uses the adjective "rational" on p. 125 about Habermas, but not about *Strukturwandel der Öffentlicheit* and the Enlightenment.

[44] Jügen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, S. 46; Jürgen Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 30-31; since the 1975 German edition is not available to me, I corrected my German mistake with the following edition of the same text: Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, Neuwied, Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1962, S. 43.

[45] Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, S. 42-75; Jürgen Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 27-56, p. 30-31 for the expression "world of letters."

[46] Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, S. 42, see also S. 43; Jürgen Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 27, see also p. 28; John L. Brooke, "Reason and Passion in the Public Sphere," p. 44, 52, etc., uses the expression "rational discourse" and mentions historians of the Unite States who "agree that 'rationality' cannot capture the essence of life in public" (p. 56), etc.

where arguments formulated rationally by individuals compete against each other.[47]   The only historical examples Habermas draws on in his book are related to written and oral language guided by human reason, making his rationalism evacuate the importance of how the debate was materialized in an enormous amount of other aspects of historical reality, such as in material culture shared by the whole population of the territories Habermas studies. His focus is on how people created a culture of rational discussion in community and does not insist on how individuals were actually related to their own social, political, economic, cultural, and national identities when they were participating in these debates.

Arendt on the other hand accentuates another crucial element that the notion of "publicity" or "public sphere" expresses and that Habermas avoids. She writes about the Greeks that "The *polis* […] is the space of appearance in the widest sense of the word, namely, the space where I appear to others as others appear to me."[48]   What Arendt emphasizes is the significance of appearance for the definition of a public sphere.[49]   Before a group of interlocutors in a community can even start to discuss in a rationalistic and critical way, they first have to appear to

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[47] Although Enzo Traverso, "Adorno et les antinomies de l'industrie culturelle," in *Communications*, 2012/2 no. 91, p. 58, does not mention the *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, refers to another book by Habermas in his footnote, and refers to a different context than this one, his critical allusion to Habermas is still relevant to mention in this context, when he alludes to "l'optimisme béat de la seconde génération de l'École de Francfort (notamment les illusions d'un Habermas sur les vertus de la rationalité communicative)."

[48] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 198, italics in the text; Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 115, says something very similar about "the *philosophes* of the Enlightenment" and their conception of "freedom," and similarly about "the *hommes de lettres*" on p. 115-116 (italics in the text); for the Heideggerian origin of Arendt's "space of appearance" and of "*The Human Condition*" (italics in the text), see Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, chapter 4, p. 107-118 in particular, with the section on "Aristotle, Arendt, and Heidegger" (p. 114-117), although Benhabis's book as a whole shows the continuity-discontinuity between Heidegger and Arendt, see also p. 188, when she writes: "Arendt's entire theory of action, as it unfolds in the space of appearances, presents us with a powerful alternative to the Kantian two-world theory of metaphysics," etc.

[49] See also Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, p. 126-127: "It has been rarely noticed that Arendt frequently runs together the phenomenological concept of 'the space of appearance' with the institutional concept of the 'public space'," and p. 167 note 9, where Benhabib mentions "the public sphere as a space of appearance," although I will not address the debate as to whether we should "distinguish" between the two, since my emphasis is not on what Benhabib calls "Narrative action" and "Agonal action," also Seyla Benhabib, "Models of Public Space," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 78, uses Arendt's expression, etc.

one another.[50] The fact of appearance that enables individuals to confirm that they can interact in dialogic collaboration is a condition of possibility for a "reasoning public," and thus precedes this rationalistic component of the public sphere. Individuals appear within a "space," as Arendt writes, and this spatial reality of appearing individuals is that which provides the possibility for interaction and discussion.[51] Arendt has thus identified a reality on which the modern public sphere described by Habermas depends, and this reality is the "space of appearance" where actual individuals first introduce themselves physically in order to take action or to discuss issues of common interest.[52] The appearance of concrete individuals in a community is still a requirement for public debate since without materially incarnated individuals, whether under an oral, written, or physical form, there would not be any public sphere.

Although Arendt underscores the importance of speech and action in the "space of appearance" for public spheres,[53] her insistence on appearance is more radical than a theory that would focus only on the linguistic aspect of appearance, where people would appear only

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[50] This follows a formula by Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, p. xliii-xliv: "I suggest in this context that 'public space' is the socio-political, and historical correlate of a much more fundamental human condition, which is that of 'only being actual within a space of appearance," and this is confirmed when Benhabib quotes Arendt on p. 129, where Arendt says that "The space of appearance" *precedes all formal constitution of the public realm*," (italics in Benhabib's quotation), which is a distinction that I will not apply to my argument since the "space of appearance" is still active in the "public sphere" I address.

[51] Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, p. 200: "whereas the Arendtian conception of the public sphere is bound to topographical and spatial metaphors such as 'space of appearance,' 'the city and its walls,' Habermas focusses on the transformations brought about in the identity of the public with the rise of the printed media."

[52] For the use of this expression see for instance Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 23: "that space of appearances where freedom can unfold its charms and become a visible, tangible reality," and p. 93 and p. 267; as already mentioned, Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, p. 200-201, uses the expression; see also Jürgen Habermas, "On the German-Jewish Heritage," p. 129, on Arendt's "space of appearance," which becomes for Habermas "the life-world," which I will not be able to address here since my focus is *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*.

[53] In addition to her account in *The Human Condition*, see also her emphasis on "speech" in Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 9: the political world of "appearances, in contradistinction to physical matters, need speech and articulation, that is, something which transcends mere physical visibility as well as sheer audibility, in order to be manifest at all"; see also Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, p. 199: "Arendt […] explores the 'linguistic structure of human action'," Benhabib on p. 197-198, writes that "Hannah Arendt was not just a thinker of political action; she was also a thinker of human culture and institutions, political parties and movements, individual and collective identities, historical trends and future possibilities," and Benhabib's reference to "human culture" is that which points in the direction of my argument.

through their speech or "reasoned opinions." Since the space where individuals appear as a public lets material appearance manifest itself with all the meaning it can have, an individual can also come to the public sphere with signification attached to his clothing. As Arendt explains, clothing remains visible to everybody in the space of appearance where individuals encounter each other in person:

> The decisive role of mere appearance, of distinguishing oneself and being conspicuous in the realm of human affairs is perhaps nowhere better illustrated than in the fact that laborers, when they entered the scene of history, felt it necessary to adopt a costume of their own, the *sans-culotte*, from which, during the French Revolution, they even derived their name. By this costume, they won a distinction of their own, and the distinction was directed against all others.[54]

Arendt argues that the importance of appearance in the event of any public debate has an eloquent example in the case of the French revolutionaries who realized that clothing enabled individuals or groups to take position in the debate. [55] Without appearance, political identities would remain abstract and would diminish the concrete relatedness of single individuals debating among each other. They would be abstract since these political identities would only be related to the meaning of letters on a piece of paper without the direct oral presence of a person who thus introduces himself or herself physically in a community. Belonging to a political group is intimately, although not necessarily, related to physical presence through appearance, and thereby through material instances such as clothing. Focusing only on "critical reasoning" in literary societies as Habermas does limits enormously the perspective from which we can understand what is "public" and political. Following Arendt, the "distinction directed against all

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[54] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 218, italics in the text; Arendt also mentions the sans-culottes in Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 50-51, although clothing is not addressed in terms of "space of appearance"; this reference to clothing is different from what Benhabib calls "modalities of taste in dress," in Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, p. 28, since this is a case related to Arendt's notion of "the *social*" (italics in the text), which is an issue that it will not be possible to discuss here.

[55] Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, p. 200: although it is true that in modernity, as Habermas shows, "There is a shift from the model of an *ocular* to an *auditory* public; the public is no longer thought of as a group of humans seeing each other, as in the case of the united *demos*" (italics in the text), this is a counter-example that shows that the "ocular" is still very important in modern politics.

others" is expressed by other means than oral and written speech.[56] A public debate takes place not only in written documents but in a space of individuals who disclose meaning through the fact of attending an event in person. This attendance can be accompanied by objects that people bring as symbols in order to signify from the outset their difference in the discussion. Arendt took the example of the *sans-culottes*, which is the case I will further examine below, but many other cases could be considered, such as when Arendt refers to the relation between "appearance" and "dress" in the public sphere of antiquity.[57]

Habermas is certainly less sensitive to the appearance of bodily features such as clothing in the public sphere. While commenting on how Michael Warner addressed "the bodily aspects of self-representation in the public sphere," Habermas concludes that "these are false questions" and that "There is no longer any attempt to link such an analysis with any remnants of a normative political theory. This is okay, but one has to distinguish what one is doing."[58] From this statement by Habermas, one could also conclude that my argumentation on clothing in the public sphere is based on a "false question" since I rely on cultural studies with a focus on "bodily" representations through clothing[59] while discussing problems in political theory, namely the intricate theoretical concept of the public sphere. Habermas seems to have forgotten that one

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[56] Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, p. 28, mentions that "in *The Human Condition* 'distinction' and 'difference' are said to become private matters of the individual. Arendt's reflections and analyses as a social and cultural historian show, however, that such matters of 'distinction' and 'difference' are never merely individual but always concern the identities and social positions of collectivities," (italics in the text), see also p. 26-27, whereas it is in Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 218-219, that Arendt also relates the "distinction" of the sans-culottes or "labor movement" to the "fact that despite all the talk and theory they were the only group on the political scene which not only defended its economic interests but fought a full-fledged political battle," Benhabib on p. 142 mentions Arendt's idea of "the working class as a *political actor*" (italics in the text), see also p. 144-145, but does not mention the notion of "distinction" in the sense of the passage on the sans-culottes by Arendt; for an historical example of "distinction" and clothing in a different sense, see Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 85.

[57] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 218, note 53; in a footnote, Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 94, note 115, mentions "Fénelon's account of the expression of a hierarchy of status in Greek dress."

[58] Jürgen Habermas, "Concluding Remarks," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 465.

[59] However, one should note the following distinction made by Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 231: "although the body and dress are intimately related, they are far from being synonymous," Wrigley talks briefly about the body in the revolution, p. 235.

of his starting points for his project on the history of the public sphere in modernity was Arendt's analysis of the "space of appearance" in *The Human Condition*. Habermas says on the one hand that Arendt's account of the Greek public sphere had a normative significance for political theory, but when an author like Warner addresses "bodily" representations that clearly parallel Arendt's idea of the sans-culottes's bodily appearance, he seems to argue in a contradictory way. Arendt's reference to bodily representations seems to have worked for him, since he did not formulate any criticism of Arendt in this respect, but Warner's further development of bodily representations does not.

Moreover, what Habermas does not seem to perceive is that the type of work done in cultural studies by scholars such as Michael Warner provides a very positive starting point for understanding what actually happens in the space of the public sphere. He then goes on to say about Warner: "I don't think this can lead back to a theory of democracy, and to be fair, it is not intended in this way."[60] In this sense, Habermas acknowledges that criticism coming from the field of cultural studies does not necessarily "intend" to develop a normative "theory of democracy," which is more Habermas's own personal project as a thinker. However, understanding what it means to talk about the modern public sphere cannot be limited to what Habermas calls a "theory of democracy" as *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* itself shows. In *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* Habermas still dedicates a section to the French Revolution without explicitly elaborating a theory of democracy and uses historical material without mentioning, and perhaps without realizing, the complexity of the task of bringing the concept of *Öffentlichkeit* into detailed and concrete historical research.

Habermas writes:

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[60] Jürgen Habermas, "Concluding Remarks," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 466.

> The concept of the public sphere, *Öffentlichkeit*, is meant as an analytical tool for ordering certain phenomena and placing them in a particular context as part of a categorical frame. This concept also has inevitable normative implications, of course, and is related (and this is the confusing part) to certain positions in normative political theory.[61]

Habermas is explaining in this passage that the "concept of the public sphere" can be used in historical research as well as in theoretical endeavors. However, the "particular contexts" in which this concept can be applied seems to have been reduced by Habermas to written documentation and to linguo-centric accounts of or coming from the past. Unlike Habermas's understanding of the issue, Arendt's notion of the public sphere as a "space of appearance" leaves room for much broader inquiries into history. It is manifestly broad enough, as Arendt herself indicates by taking the example of the sans-culottes, to include a multiplicity of cultural "phenomena," to use Habermas's word, such as clothing and bodily representations, which are excluded in Habermas's analysis of the public sphere. Habermas not only excludes this type of public reality but he dismisses too quickly other accounts in cultural studies, such as Warner's text, that widen the way we think about what we understand as public by focussing on bodily reality.

Arendt's treatment of appearances in public reality led her to mention clothing as an example and she shows thereby a considerable sensitivity to the cultural aspect of the public sphere. The material element of culture in the public sphere is also emphasized when she talks about the "things" or objects that create meaning in the reality of political publicity. Arendt writes:

> Since our feeling for reality depends utterly upon appearance and therefore upon the existence of a public realm into which things can appear out of the darkness of sheltered existence, even the twilight which illuminates our private and intimate lives is ultimately derived from the much harsher light of the public realm.[62]

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[61] Jürgen Habermas, "Concluding Remarks," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 462-463 (italics in the text).

[62] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 51.

In this sense, "things" manifest themselves in the public sphere in such a way that these appearing objects or "things" at the disposal of the members of the community are part of what entails the human "feeling of reality." Among these things present in the public are clothing, since they usually come along with the presence of any individual in political communities. The "public realm" is thus characterized according to Arendt by the appearance of not only individuals, but of "things," which are part of the "space of appearances" in what is considered public and "common to all," to use Arendt's words. And these things can reach a very high level of signification in the public sphere with clothing as an exemplary case in French revolutionary history. Arendt dedicates a passage to the importance of the "thing" that we call clothing for the political group called the sans-culottes, intimately related by name to the "space of appearance" of the public sphere. This shows how the difference of emphasis in Habermas and Arendt, one on rational critical thought and the other on the space of individual appearance in community, lead the two authors to use different historical material to elaborate their normative theory.

In a passage from *The Human Condition*, Arendt examines the relation between things human beings fabricate and what can be considered public:

> [T]he term "public" signifies the world itself, in so far as it is common to all of us and distinguished from our privately owned place in it. […] it is related […] to the human artifact, the fabrication of human hands, as well as to affairs which go on among those who inhabit the man-made world together. To live together in the world means essentially that a world of things is between those who have it in common, as a table is located between those who sit around it; the world, like every in-between, relates and separates men at the same time.[63]

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[63] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 52; Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, p. 127, also quotes sections of this passage and other phrases from this page by Arendt, but does not mention the link to clothing.

Arendt thus draws on "her own differentiation between work, labor, and action" [64] that structures *The Human Condition*. Although it will not be possible to explain these three cardinal concepts in Arendt's theory, her understanding of the notion of work can be used for an account of the material aspect of the public sphere that Habermas did not consider. In Arendt's opinion, human beings produce objects destined to remain durably in reality and this tangible world of things or objects made by "human hands" provides a home where individuals can interact. This "home" is in Arendt's terms the tangible "world" without which human relations could not have a truly stable reality. The material product of human work creates a world as the setting in which human action appears in community. In other words, individuals share a materially fabricated world which is a condition of possibility of the relations between the members of a community, since human beings need a material space, called world, to "inhabit." Among the objects that can be defined as being part of the "things between" individuals is clothing, that is, clothing that people share as their common material culture in the public sphere. In this sense, clothing as the product of human work takes part in the constitution of the world that Arendt defines literally as public. The publicness of clothing as a "fabrication of human hands" and "artifact" is an example that Arendt gives in subsequent sections of her text on the public sphere, which shows how the material appearance of individuals plays a crucial role in the dynamics of modern politics and its history.

Arendt also writes:

> The term "public" […] means, first, that everything that appears in public can be seen and heard by everybody and has the widest possible publicity. For us,

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[64] Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, p. 199, mentions that "Habermas's crucial distinction between 'labor' and 'interaction,' which is at the origin of his concept of 'communicative action,' is deeply indebted to Arendt's critique of Karl Marx in *The Human Condition* and to her own differentiation between work, labor, and action" (italics in the text); however, Benhabib does not mention how this "differentiation" by Arendt also distinguishes her approach from Habermas, in particular when clothing is considered; see also Benhabib's interesting description of "work" and the link to Heidegger on p. 108, and the quotation on p. 109, although clothing is not mentioned explicitly in relation to clothing, but only "cultural creations" (p. 108).

appearance – something that is being seen and heard by others as well as by ourselves – constitutes reality. Compared with the reality which comes from being seen and heard, even the greatest forces of intimate life – the passions of the heart, the thoughts of the mind, the delights of the senses – lead an uncertain, shadowy kind of existence unless and until they are transformed, deprivatized and deindividualized, as it were, into a shape to fit them for public appearance. The most current of such transformations occurs in storytelling and generally in artistic transposition of individual experiences.[65]

Arendt delves into the idea of the public sphere by stressing that "the widest possible publicity" is one of its characteristics. Unlike Habermas who refers to those who know how to read and write, Arendt describes public reality as what is accessible to "everybody." Her encompassing perspective on the public sphere is grounded in the notion of reality in general as it is given to human beings and this enables her to include all human beings in the phenomenon of the public sphere. Arendt even goes further: human "existence," to use her word, is something on which we can shed light inasmuch as "publicity," to use Arendt's word again, is granted to it. The awareness that we can have of human reality and existence stems from this public encounter of things produced by human beings or of individuals who introduces themselves in the world in front of each other as a public reality. Her broad-ranging conception shows that things and individuals reach "public appearance" simply when they are "seen and heard." This is what allows for an exploration of the material culture of the public sphere present in all strata of a community, since cultural products such as clothing can be "seen" and interpreted by all. Therefore, Arendt's conception of the public reality of a community takes into consideration all human manifestations when they are brought into a space where "everybody" can access them, whether these manifestations correspond to written publications or dress culture. The whole population of a territory could thus be included in the study of the public

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[65] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 50; Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, p. 127, also quotes sections of this passage and other phrases from this page by Arendt, but does not mention the link to clothing.

sphere from Arendt's point of view, which is a central element that makes her account different from the account found in Habermas.[66]

Although Arendt's insistence on appearance is more promising for historical research on the public sphere than Habermas's restricted conception, since her perspective is broader, she avoids to address or to mention more explicitly the symbolic significance of the appearance of material culture and clothing. When Arendt mentions that a reified object, which includes clothing as a public instance, can be understood as something that "transcends both the sheer functionalism of things produced for consumption and the sheer utility of objects produced for use,"[67] one could expect an exploration of the symbolic weight of material things such as clothing in the case of the sans-culottes that she singles out herself. However, she does not mention symbolism in politics as it relates to these material objects or things. The interpretation of symbols in the material culture of politics is certainly something that goes beyond the "function" of utility. This means that the appearance of clothing in the public sphere is not symbolically neutral. In English, the word "symbol" comes from the Greek word "sumbolon."[68] One of the possible meanings contained in the Greek word "symbolon" is "sign of recognition."[69] In this sense, if clothing can be understood as being symbolically significant for the recognition of individuals and thereby non-neutral in terms of meaning, it is possible to assert that this symbolical

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[66] Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, p. 201, does not mention this important point when she writes: "When Arendt links the public space with the space of appearances, as she often does, she primarily has in mind a model of face-to-face human interactions," however, when Benhabib asks on p. 141: "Is the Arendtian concept of public space sophisticated and rich enough to do justice to the sociological complexity and variety of modern institutions?," I would tend to answer yes, to some extent, and this is what I try to show below, although Benhabib, in her next sentence, seems to have something different in mind with her question, than my topic.

[67] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 173, on this page Arendt also writes "there is in fact no thing that does not in some way transcend its functional use, and its transcendence, its beauty or ugliness, is identical with appearing publicly and being seen."

[68] *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*. *Volume 2*. *N-Z*, Fifth edition, Oxford-New York, Oxford University Press, [1973] 2002, p. 3148

[69] A. Bailly, *Le Grand Bailly*. *Dictionnaire Grec Français*, rédigé avec le concours de E. Egger, édition revue par L. Séchan et P. Chantraine, avec, en appendice, de nouvelles notices de mythologie et religion par L. Séchan, Paris, Hachette, [1894] 2000, p. 1821-1822.

significance of clothing enables the individuals of the public sphere to "recognize" the other members of the community as belonging to this or that group. Symbols that are part of a clothing apparatus are thus "signs," as the Greek word implies, made by human beings and these signs offer the possibility to represent political positions for those who give meaning to the world of objects and to individuals in the public sphere. When individuals appear in the public sphere the material things that accompany them, such as clothing, signal a material way of appearing. This material way of appearing makes a sign to which people give a meaning and thus which produces representations that can have a political connotation and recognition, as "'symbolic forms of political practice.'"[70]

It seems that in some of his work Habermas is more sensitive to symbols than Arendt. This can be inferred from the fact that Habermas "argued that for all sociologists, and historians as well, the objective domain is constituted by a symbolically prestructured objectification."[71] However, the symbolic world of the public sphere in terms of material culture is still left out from the most part of his *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*. Habermas seems to refer to his later work since the French Revolution's "symbolically prestructured objectification" is not part of his analysis. The "objective domain" of French history, a history in which the historian forms and finds his "object" of study, certainly contains symbols. These symbols were structured by the context as they were brought into the world of things appearing in the public sphere, that is, things or individuals made objects (as "objectifications"), but the symbolism of material culture

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[70] Richard Wrigley (quoting Lynn Hunt) in Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 2, see also p. 5, where Wrigley writes that "attitudes and responses to dress are a touchstone for matters of collective and self-representation, and the negotiation of questions of identity apprehended through the culturally complex business of the legibility of appearances."

[71] Jürgen Habermas, "Concluding Remarks," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 465; see also Habermas on Arendt, Jürgen Habermas, "On the German-Jewish Heritage," p. 128-130, where Habermas also talks about "cultural tradition," "the life-world," "symbolic structures," Arendt's emphasis on "the symbolic nature of the web of human relationships" explained in terms of "speech," etc, which I will not address here since my focus is *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*.

at work in the dynamics of the public sphere is not considered by Habermas. His allusion to "the symbolic place of power – a vacuum since 1789," to "identity-conveying symbolizations," to "political culture," or to "cultural traditions" remains without elaboration.[72]

Arendt writes that "even use objects are judged not only according to the subjective needs of men but by the objective standards of the world where they will find their place, to last, to be seen, and to be used."[73] Among the "use objects" that Arendt refers to, one can find clothing since clothing can be used in terms of utility and can have a function of utility based on the different "needs" of each individual subject. However, Arendt stipulates that these objects are also destined to be "judged" and "seen" without any reference to their utility, which means that their "objective" presence can be part of "standards" or conventions of symbolical meaning that do not depend on the difference of each individual subject. "Beyond" the subjectivism of each individual, to write with Arendt, there is a world of material objects such as clothing where these objects are part of a series of cultural manifestations that have conventionally accepted symbolical meaning.[74]

Since clothing is something that is added to the bare presence of the individual, clothing has a symbolic presence that is public since it is not located in the private, that is, "within the confines of the body"[75] or within "the unequaled privacy of having a body."[76] Clothing differentiates itself from mere "privacy" since it is part of a material world that is shared by the whole

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[72] Jürgen Habermas, "Further Reflections on the Public Sphere," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 452-453.

[73] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 173.

[74] Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, p. 201, implicitly refers to this, but without the reference to material culture, when she writes about Arendt: "Public space […] is a space in which a collectivity becomes present to itself and recognizes itself through a shared interpretive repertoire."

[75] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 112.

[76] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 115, the paragraph in which this citation is taken addresses the concept of labor, which I will not be able to address here; see also about Arendt's laboring individual who "is imprisoned in the privacy of his own body," and who is thus "worldless," p. 118; on Arendt's notion of "privacy," see Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, p. 211-215.

community in the world of objects. It comes from a process of fabrication, as Arendt would put it, and then is attached to the body. This attachment creates meaning when it is encountered in the community, as any other object made by human beings extends itself into the symbolical domain when it is "judged," "seen," and "recognized." Arendt talks about fabricated objects, which includes clothing, as that which creates a world in which human beings can inhabit, and writes that "Without being talked about by men and without housing them, the world would not be a human artifice, but a heap of unrelated things to which each isolated individual was at liberty to add one more object."[77] The world reified by human beings gains meaning when it is "talked about" and judged since it is made to be interpreted, just like the clothing of the sans-culottes Arendt refers to was part of a world that has been talked about ever since the French Revolution. The meaning of the objects of the world such as clothing takes the isolated individual out of his private sphere and creates a symbolical reference point from which individuals interact and recognize themselves publically. It seems that this is specifically the element of the public sphere that Habermas addressed only too partially in his account, whereas Arendt seems to have opened the door much more significantly to the idea of bringing material culture into our understanding of the "space of appearance" of the public sphere.

Arendt explains that "most words and deeds are *about* some worldly objective reality in addition to being a disclosure of the acting and speaking agent,"[78] and this "worldly objective reality" "physically lies between them and out of which arise their specific, objective, worldly interests."[79] The "tangible," as Arendt would put it, between individuals points in the direction of the cultural and public manifestation of material culture such as clothing. The world contains objects that give a material setting for the interaction of human beings. Clothing as an object of

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[77] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 204.
[78] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 182, italics in the text.
[79] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 182.

the world is worn by individuals in such a way that it "lies between them." Among the "words" that people use to talk about their situation, one will inevitably come across expressions such as "sans-culottes," "blue or white-collar" which contains a clear reference to the world between the individuals of the community and to what this material reality of objects, or "this wordly objective reality," in Arendt's terms, means publically.

Habermas's rationalistic public sphere detached from what materially "lies between" the individuals is attenuated by the first part of the *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*. The next section of my argumentation examines the treatment of clothing in Habermas's book in order to contrast the short section of his book he dedicates to the public sphere in the middle ages with the way he interprets the event of the French Revolution later in his book. It sheds light on the possibilities that can be opened up when the public sphere is understood as a "space of appearance" in the widest sense of the term,[80] that is, on possibilities that Habermas himself examines, although too briefly.

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[80] It should be noted that while Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, p. 163, is right in saying that in her work on the French Revolution "Arendt minimizes the new political spaces created by the people and for the people – the revolutionary societies, the clubs, the municipal councils and militia, women's associations," Arendt still provides a conceptual framework that can be taken very broadly as I try to show here.

Habermas and the Question of Clothing

At the beginning of his *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* Habermas refers to the prehistory of the emergence of the public sphere in modern times. He explains that the distinction between the private and the public that is articulated gradually throughout the development of modernity is not specific to the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, the notion of the public aspect of the community was still present in some way in medieval Europe. Habermas notes that the hierarchies at work in the structure of European medieval communities were embodied in different forms of representation. The distribution of power in society was indicated and signified according to a certain way of representing, through a system of signs, different hierarchical positions in the daily reality of people. These representations are what can be seen as having publicity or "Öffentlichkeit." This means that when certain individuals had more power than others, they had a way to show it publicly so that the population could recognize their authority and status. Habermas writes about the Middle Ages in Europe: "Die Entfaltung der repräsentativen Öffentlichkeit ist an Attribute der Person geknüpft: an Insignien (Abzeichen, Waffen), Habitus (Kleidung, Haartracht), Gestus (Gruβform, Gebärde) und Rhetorik (Form der Anrede, förmliche Rede überhaupt), mit einem Wort – an einen strengen Kodex 'edlen' Verhaltens."[81]

The public aspect of the medieval community was thus manifesting itself in the way the aristocracy or the "nobles" produced representations of their position of power in their community. These representations ended up being specific "attributes" proper to the members of the aristocratic class of society. Some individual persons had "attributes" that distinguished and

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[81] Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, S. 20-21; Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 8; Craig Calhoun, "Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 7, underestimated this aspect of Habermas's account of the Middle Ages by avoiding it in his summary; Michael Warner also misses this important point when he writes that "In earlier varieties of the public sphere it was important that images of the body *not* figure importantly in public discourse," Michael Warner, "The Mass Public and the Mass Subject," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 385 (italics in the text), as well as on page 388 of his text where he emphasizes the "body."

marked their importance in the community. Among the different attributes and modes of representation of power that Habermas enumerates, half are related to clothing. The "Insignien" are defined in terms of "Abzeichen." An "Abzeichen" can be an emblem or a badge that can be used on clothing or armor in order to signify that the individual who bears it on his or her clothes belongs to a noble family or group. It is a representation in the sense that it symbolizes the attachment of an individual to a community of power, a symbol that is shown publicly on the clothes or armor of the individual who bears it. Habermas adds to the list of attributes the "Habitus" that he defines in terms of "Kleidung" and "Haartracht." "Kleidung" or "clothes" thus invokes the idea of habitus since clothing is an example of the way people appear in the world as physical bodies. "Haartracht" is a reference to hairstyle and is an aspect of the body that can be seen as ornamental and thus potentially symbolical in its use. Clothing and hairstyle are two cases of representation that enabled medieval aristocracy to put forward their power as recognizable visibly and represent it publicly so that their distinction could be identified and recognized.

Habermas also maintains that this form of publicity through symbols in clothing was more an attempt to single out the virtue and values of the aristocratic families in power or in the struggle for power. As Habermas explains in the context of medieval society, in the mind of the aristocracy, "Tugend muβ sich verkörpern, muβ sich öffentlich darstellen lassen können."[82] The publicity of the medieval nobles can be described as "die Öffentlichkeit der höfisch-ritterlichen Repräsentation."[83] In this sense, bringing forth in public the symbols of distinction is something that happened in courtly societies and in the presentation of the knightly community of medieval

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[82] Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, S. 21; Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 8; Michael Warner mentions this idea of "virtue" and "embodiment" in Habermas but clothing is avoided, see Michael Warner, "The Mass Public and the Mass Subject," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 388.

[83] Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, S. 21; Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 8.

society in general. This was part of traditional aristocratic self-assertion. Noble family identities

and the preservation of hierarchies in society from which they were benefiting were the stakes of

this system of representation in clothing. Habermas emphasises the fact that in the Middle Ages,

these assertions of aristocratic distinction in clothing did not constitute a debate in what we

would call today a public sphere.

In *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* Habermas is mainly interested in tracing the origin of the

idea of a sphere of public debate in modern society, which means that his treatment of clothing in

the Middle Ages as a form of publicity aims to show that medieval societies did not have the idea

of public debate developed by the Enlightenment. Habermas is looking for the historical origin

of what the Enlightenment came to call the "Sphäre der politischen Kommunikation."[84]

Therefore, the public aspect of medieval communities involved a display of aristocratic

distinction without getting into a culture of communicational exchange about the common good.

On Habermas's reading, the publicity of clothing in the Middle Ages was participating in a

system of differentiation that did not promote discussion. The representations endorsed by the

aristocracy through clothing were not understood as tools for the articulation of a discourse in

debate with other opposing views.

Although Habermas may be right in his historical account of the reality of publicity in the

Middle Ages, his narrative about the transformation of the public sphere that follows loses track

of the theme of clothing. In a sense, Habermas's forgetfulness about clothing can be interpreted

as a logical consequence of his project since he investigates constantly throughout his book the

instances of publicity where linguistic exchange is implied. For that reason, the press, print,

parliamentary deliberations, or telecommunications occupies most of the space he has for his

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[84] Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, S. 21; Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 8.

research about the public sphere. This avoidance of the publicity of clothing in the public sphere through the unfolding of modernity is in my opinion highly problematic. The important case of modern history that pushes me to think that Habermas missed the importance of clothing for the articulation of the reality of what is public and political in modernity is the French Revolution.[85]

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that Habermas's forgetfulness of clothing in his interpretation of the French Revolution is surprising when one considers his chronological approach. He starts by examining the medieval precedents of modernity's public sphere and pays attention to the role of clothing.[86] In spite of that, he does not see the continuity and discontinuity between the importance of clothing before modernity and its importance during modernity as unfolding in the revolution and in its emerging public sphere.

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[85] Harold Mah's article mentions the literature that criticizes Habermas's avoidance of other public manifestations such as "rites, festivals, satire, ceremony, and carnivals," but clothing is not mentioned by Mah, see Harold Mah, "Phantasies of the Public Sphere," p. 164. Moreover, Mah's account of this section of Habermas's text does not address the importance of clothing, see Harold Mah, "Phantasies of the Public Sphere," p. 165; Brooke also mentions the importance of symbols, "ceremonies, parades, reading, and demonstrating" as well as "theatricality," in the public sphere, but clothing is not mentioned, see John L. Brooke, "Reason and Passion in the Public Sphere," p. 43, 46, 48, 49 (for the first quotation), 50, 53 (for the second quotation), 54, and 56, although Brooke focuses exclusively on discussing cultural history books about American history.

[86] Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, S. 314, note 43, alludes to the "Ordnung der Kleider" in relation to "Die Privatrechtsgeschichte der Neuzeit" (S. 97), also to "der noblesse de robe" (quoted from p. 81 of the 1962 edition I mention in my bibliography); Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 265 note 44, and p. 76, and p. 68 for last quotation; however, Habermas does not elaborate on clothing in politics.

Habermas's Linguo-centrism and the Public Clothing of the Sans-culottes

Habermas dedicated a section of his book to the French Revolution since this event of modernity cannot be neglected when one wishes to understand the arrival of a specifically modern idea of a public sphere. Habermas writes: "in Frankreich ensteht, allerdings erst seit etwa der Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts, ein politisch räsonierendes Publikum."[87] Habermas thus found what he was looking for at the heart of modern history instead of in the Middle Ages and he gives eighteenth century France as an example. The public sphere created in the French context included "reasoning" assertions in competition about public reality. Oral and written language were thus the tools that the participants used to get their message across and retort to their adversaries. Habermas then stages the French Revolution and makes an important statement in respect to his investigation focused on the written and oral aspect of language: "Die Revolution schafft in Frankreich über Nacht, freilich auch weniger beständig, wozu in England eine stetige Entwicklung über ein Jahrhundert gebraucht hatte: für das politisch räsonierende Publikum die bis dahin fehlenden Institutionen."[88] Habermas's treatment of the emergence of a public sphere equipped with institutions suggests that the essential element of the public sphere has to be debated in terms of "reasoning." The rationalism of the Enlightenment is interpreted by Habermas as one of the main starting points of the modern idea of this public sphere of debate.

It is from this perspective that Habermas avoids the theme of clothing addressed earlier in his treatment of the Middle Ages and that he puts so much emphasis on things such as the

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[87] Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, S. 87; Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 67; since the 1975 edition is not available to me at the moment, I used the following edition to correct my German mistake: Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, Neuwied, Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1962, S. 81.
[88] Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, S. 90; Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 69-70.

Encyclopedia and its publication, the foundation of journals, literature, or the press, in which debates were held. I would suggest that Habermas misses the question of clothing because he focuses on the public sphere as a "space of rationality" instead of understanding the public sphere as a "space of appearance," as Arendt would put it. In his historical research on the culture of clothing in the French Revolution, Richard Wrigley writes that there was "a deep-seated desire to institute a new regime of appearances."[89] When Wrigley's historical scrupulousness is combined with Arendt's focus on appearance as the main characteristic of the public sphere, a whole range of possibilities emerges: the public sphere of appearances in the French Revolution becomes the locus where it is possible to interpret the event of the revolution in a way that includes the whole of the human population that participated in the revolutionary era. Many significant historical examples illustrate this.

Habermas quotes the "Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen" and his analysis revolves around the importance of the "Schutz der freien Meinungsäußerung."[90] Habermas is certainly right when he shows the importance of this initiative taken by the French revolutionaries. To be precise, his account of the public sphere in the French Revolution addresses the question of freedom of expression as concretized in legislation. However, his presupposition that only "reasoning" interventions are worthy of consideration influences the account so that the example of clothing in lawmaking is not identified by Habermas. Auslander was able to target cases of legislation about clothing in 1792 during the French Revolution,[91] which is one example among many other cases.[92] This testifies that clothing had an important, articulate relation to politics and to the public sphere. In the following year in 1793 there were

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[89] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 80, see also p. 85 where Wrigley mentions "the creation of a new regime of revolutionary appearances," and for the expression "régime of appearances," p. 240, 242, etc.
[90] Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, S. 91; Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 70.
[91] Leora Auslander, "Regeneration Through the Everyday?," p. 230.
[92] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 59-96, see also the whole book filled with examples.

public debates about clothing and its connection to the republicanism of the revolution: this was part of the ideal of the "collective participation in the construction of a new national – republican – everyday."[93]   The participants of the political deliberations of the Jacobins in power in 1793 took seriously the question of clothing and came up with a law on clothing. They "decreed, at a meeting of 8 brumaire (29 October 1793) that freedom of costume was the right of all citizens."[94] The use of clothing in public celebrations was debated in the context of "the Festival of Federation in July 1790," among other "Republican festivals" for which clothing was discussed.[95]   In addition, as Auslander explains, painters and artists were taking part in this public and contentious redefinition of identity through dress and clothing. Wrigley mentions for instance the debates on the idea of "a national costume" taking "place in the Société populaire et républicaine des arts between March and June 1794," who believed that "dress" had been wrongly "used to distinguish between rank and wealth."[96]   The revolutionaries were thus bringing clothing into their political and legislative struggles since it had an important public significance.[97]

Yet, Habermas was not able to perceive how his analysis of clothing in medieval society could also be applied to the context of the French Revolution and to the definition of a public

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[93] Leora Auslander, "Regeneration Through the Everyday?," p. 230; Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 5, while criticizing Richard Cobb, writes that he "would rather want to define revolutionary political culture as something which was as much manifest in its quotidian experience as in matters of rhetoric and legislation."

[94] Jennifer Harris, "The Red Cap of Liberty," p. 311; for other examples of debates on clothing recorded in French political history during the revolution, see for instance Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 60-66, as well as his allusion to "the Convention's deliberations of freedom of dress" on p. 79, and to "the decree protecting freedom of dress (8 brumaire an II, 29 October 1793)" on p. 106 (also mentioned on p. 64), see also p. 244 for contextual elements.

[95] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 83, see also p. 84, 146, 191, and 246.

[96] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 79; to give only one other example, see also Jennifer Harris, "The Red Cap of Liberty," p. 304, who seems to refer to the same "discussion" of the "Société," and adds a date.

[97] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 7: there was an "intensive scrutiny of people's vestimentary identity, alert to the crystalisation of new groups, parties, clubs, factions, and allegiances both overt and covert. It is significant that almost all the legislation which directly addressed matters of dress was driven by a desire to impose much-needed control on conflicts arising out of inflammatory disputes and disturbances in streets, theatres, and other public spaces," see also p. 10 where "intensive scrutiny" is also mentioned, along with the idea of "legibility of appearances," etc, and see also p. 229.

sphere of debate about the common good of the community. For Habermas, the public debate on freedom of expression in the revolution is restricted to written and oral speech, as if there were no specific physical space of appearance for the actual course of the revolution's debate on freedom, as if the physical space of human interaction were not indicating anything about freedom in the public sphere. As historical research has shown, the public sphere of revolutionary France was concerned with clothing and ended up using dress significantly as a means of revolutionary struggle and expression.[98] More precisely, the sphere where the public debate was taking place was also an actual space where human appearances and identities could emerge and affirm themselves: Wrigley writes about "the Revolution" that "its evolving political culture […] had been given an explicit programmatic vestimentary form."[99] Moreover, he mentions the revolution's "highly developed scrutiny of dress and appearances by journalists, agents, and the inhabitants of public space generally."[100] People participating in the revolution's public debate were paying attention and were "sensitive" to what individuals were wearing since clothing was heavily meaningful. This also means that in the context of the French Revolution and of its culture of "official costume," "the creation of new symbolic forms of dress was taken extremely seriously."[101] There is a culture of clothing in the French public sphere that has to be considered "seriously" in any account of the French revolutionary debate.[102]

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[98] Harold Mah also mentions the importance of the "different forms of expression" in his critique of Habermas but the question of clothing is not considered, see Harold Mah, "Phantasies of the Public Sphere," p. 168; Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 231, on clothing as "a metaphorical means" in politics, also p. 232.

[99] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 271.

[100] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 240, see also p. 111: "Scrutiny of the wearing of the cockade occurred most consistently at the entrance to public spaces and institutions," also p. 202, where he says about 1794 that "with the establishment of a ubiquitous régime of surveillance, dress in general had become a site for apprehensive scrutiny, and moreover […] this applied to the most ordinary items of dress," and p. 233 for the importance of clothing for "the reading of identities," and p. 234: "The reliability of appearances and dress as a means to signal identity continued to provide a measure of the Revolution's political consolidation."

[101] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 60, and for an interesting example, see p. 201 and note 74.

[102] Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, p. 210: "The cultural construction of the pubic in diverse human societies at different points in history offers the most direct access to understanding the self-definition of a collectivity," which is what I try to inquire into here, see also p. 210-211: "In entering the public,

An obvious historical example that reveals the crucial importance of clothing during the French Revolution is the group called the "sans-culottes,"[103] which was already singled out by Arendt with her insistence on the public sphere as a "space of appearance." The sans-culottes were a revolutionary group during the French Revolution who shared a "pratique politique commune."[104] They were thus actors in the public dynamic of the revolution and their name referred precisely to a style of clothing.[105] The sans-culottes were those who did not wear the traditional aristocratic costume, which involved a type of pants called "culotte." To use Habermas's vocabulary about the Middle Ages, the sans-culottes had "attributes"[106] expressed in clothing and one of these attributes was expressed negatively: they did not dress up like nobles since they were humbly dressed and were intimately bound to broad-ranging lower-class people.[107] Their choice of symbolical dress came to be "associated with the intervention of *le peuple* in political activities."[108] The reference to clothing without breeches was raised to the

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every new social, cultural, political group presents its point of view to others, or it re-presents itself to others, in the sense of refashioning itself as a presence in public," and p. 166: "Only when humans give the space of appearance in which all action and speech unfold a visible and sable form, and create institutions, do they create a public space."

[103] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 232: "In the importance given to the currency of liberty caps – both as dress and as emblems – and the stylized outfit associated with *sans-culottes*, as with the primordial emblematic burden carried by the cockade, matters of dress were placed at the heart of revolutionary discourse" (italics in the text).

[104] Claude Mazauric, in François Furet, Claude Mazauric and Louis Bergeron, "Les sans-culottes et la Révolution française," p. 1102; see also Michael Sonenscher, *Sans-Culottes. An Eighteenth-Century Emblem*, p. 8, where he explains that at the origin "The phrase *sans culottes* […] belonged fully and firmly to the world of the salon, where, well before the French Revolution, it was simply part of a joke" (italics in the text), and thus the expression "sans-culotte" was not originally a political expression as it became later during the Revolution; Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 213, alludes to "the earlier satirical use of the term 'sans culotte'," also p. 230, however, it will not be possible to go into the details of these issues since my point is different.

[105] On the importance of clothing for the sans-culottes's recognisability, see Michel Naudin, "La réaction culturelle de l'an III," p. 280, 282, 287-289; on the origin of the expression in relation to the "salons," see Michael Sonenscher, *Sans-Culottes. An Eighteenth-Century Emblem*, p. 5, 7.

[106] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 161, uses the expression "allegorical attribute" when talking about the red cap, which was a symbol of the sans-culottes, as will be explained below, see also pages 167-168 for Wrigley's use of the expression "attribute of Liberty" as the red cap, as well as "allegorical attributes," in addition to p. 193 for "allegorical attribute," etc, also p. 242: people such as "Priests" also had "their 'attributes'."

[107] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 201: Their "outfit" brought together "*carmagnole, pantalon, and bonnet rouge*, but sometimes only one or two of these elements" (italics in the text), see also p. 215, and for various historical illustrations of the sans-culottes with analysis, see p. 203-214.

[108] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 197 (italics in the text), Wrigley focuses on the "*bonnet rouge*" (italics in the text) in this section of his text on the sans-culottes; Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 50-51, associates the sans-culottes with "the people" and with "the poor," whose interest, in her opinion, made the revolution fail, and

title of a highly significant revolutionary emblem,[109] where the sans-culottes are singled out significantly in the revolution from 1792.[110] The theme of clothing in the public sphere of the revolution shows that the sans-culottes had a name that was reflecting the reality of the publicity of the revolution itself.[111] If it is true that the sans-culottes's name reflected the dynamic of the public sphere, the public sphere itself was also reflecting the clothing culture of the sans-culottes: the laws concerning "freedom of dress" made in 1793 stemmed from quarrels related to the "wearing of the *bonnet rouge*,"[112] a symbol of the sans-culottes (as will be discussed further below).[113]

Arendt does not mention their symbolical clothing, see also p. 65 and note 18 on p. 280-281, see also p. 71, 81, 84-85, 96, etc; however, in Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 218, Arendt, as quoted above, mentions the "costume" of "the *sans-culotte* ," associates this "movement" with "the labor movement" and then on page 219 says that "it could represent the people as a whole – if we understand by *le peuple* the actual political body, distinguished as such from the population as well as from society" (italics in the text); Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, p. 144, quotes Arendt's phrase "could represent the people as whole," but does not mention the sans-culottes and clothing, and on p. 163 criticizes Arendt in her book on revolution since "Arendt minimizes the new political spaces created by the people and for the people – the revolutionary societies, the clubs, the municipal councils and militia, women's associations."

[109] Michael Sonenscher, *Sans-Culottes. An Eighteenth-Century Emblem*, p. 57, 340: the "emblems […] lent themselves readily to the type of metonymy involved in using the name of a thing or a condition (like being without breeches) for the name of a person."

[110] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 198; also p. 205: "The dramatic end to the monarchy on 10 August 1792 consolidated the political visibility of the *sans-culotte* and its representability"; also p. 202, where Wrigley talks about a "repudiation of *sans-culottes* costume in the spring of 1794" (italics in the text), see also p. 201, and p. 215: "The vestimentary ensemble of the *sans-culottes* had a short career, only being actively adopted between late 1792 and the spring of 1794" (italics in the text), see also p. 216 for a concise explanation of why it was "discarded" (i.e. unreliability, no laws protecting it, historical situation of the group), see also p. 229-230 on the importance of the "deceptive" aspect of the costume of "the *sans-culotte*" (italics in the text), and p. 234-235; see also François Furet, in François Furet, Claude Mazauric et Louis Bergeron, "Les sans-culottes et la Révolution française," p. 1099: the "mouvement sans-culotte […] est en contestation permanente, jusqu'au printemps 1794, avec les groupes qui dirigent la Révolution, les maîtres de la Convention et des Comités."

[111] The word "sans-culotte" even appears in political and administrative denominations and vocabulary in 1792 and 1793, see Michael Sonenscher, *Sans-Culottes. An Eighteenth-Century Emblem*, p. 7, 16, 51, 55, 339; Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 191: "dress functioned as a form of stylized shorthand for signalling a socio-political allegiance," see also p. 199: "Although a degree of legitimacy and accepted currency was achieved by the term in the wake of 10 August 1792, there was still no formal legislative or official codification of *sans-culotte* costume" (italics in the text), see also p. 215.

[112] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 106 (italics in the text), see also p. 188, where Wrigley writes that the "vestimentary dimension" of the sans-culottes "was a phenomenon defined and negotiated in the turbulent public realm of revolutionary Paris."

[113] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 199: to give another example, speaking publically in certain communities could also involve sans-culottes clothing, e.g. "*bonnet rouge* and trousers ('pantalon')" (italics in the text).

The point that Habermas missed by focussing on written and oral language is that during the French Revolution clothing was no less a means to participate in the debate in the public sphere than rational debate in linguistic communication. The individuals without any intellectual background could still call into question the situation of the revolution by expressing themselves symbolically in clothing. As Richard Wrigley explains, the sans-culottes's "versimentary ensemble functioned as a site for the assertion and challenging of political values."[114] In this sense, "The virtue of publicness could materialize other than by the intellectual transactions of a polite and literate bourgeois milieu."[115] Those who were silenced by the hierarchical system of the Ancien Régime and still illiterate during the Revolution could find expression outside of the realm of public argumentation pointed out by Habermas.[116] The creation of a space of rational debate by the bourgeois class was accompanied by a wider space of appearance where clothing enabled the lower classes to be represented in the debate, in a material language that they knew. Everybody had a "lived experience of reading identity through dress and appearances,"[117] whereas the intellectually abstract discourse of the bourgeois class was not accessible to everyone. The representation of the lower classes had its starting point in the symbolical significance of the sans-culottes's costume, which appeared in the public arena in a way that

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[114] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 187, see also p. 87, as well as Wrigley's comment on Lynn Hunt's book on the French Revolution on page 2: "dress […] is treated as a highly significant site for the articulation of beliefs and ideas, and a key ingredient in the consolidation of a new political culture," and page 7 where he mentions the notion of "public assertion" through clothing, and p. 229; when Jon Cowans mentions Habermas's avoidance of "those without property and education" in the French Revolution, the use of clothing and the sans-culottes are not mentioned, see Jon Cowans, "Habermas and French History," p. 141.

[115] Geoff Eley, "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 304; see also Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 114, who writes that the revolution or "new politics could not be a purely intellectual phenomenon as this would ensure its popular inefficacy," and mentions the importance of "the language of emblems"; however, Wrigley, on page 218 note 16, mentions about 1791 that "the general tenor of the participation in the new revolutionary political culture was still predominantly bourgeois," although it is not clear whether Wrigley talks only about the "*Faubourg Saint-Antoine*" (italics in the text) and 1791 or about the revolution in general; Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 38, mentions the importance of "this immense majority" in the French Revolution which was discredited in pre-revolutionary France from "the public realm," "its space and its light."

[116] Geoff Eley, "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 305: It will not be possible to discuss why, as Eley explains, "Habermas's opposition of 'educated/uneducated' and 'literate/illiterate' simply don't work."

[117] Expression used by Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 232, see also p. 271.

everyone could understand. The appearance of such clothing indicated through material representation that the people excluded from educational privileges were not to be forgotten in the public sphere, and that the definition of the French nation by the bourgeois was incomplete without them.

Annie Geffroy explains that people in revolutionary France probably used the expression sans-culottes to include the whole nation.[118] The sans-culottes had at their disposal most of the conditions of possibility for imagining their homeland as a nation of equals, for producing representations of their own imagined community, and for using conventions of clothing to define a national identity: they had the press, print, newspapers, a vernacular language, a sense of simultaneity on a large territory, a disarticulation of the monarchy, and a secular discourse.[119] Their use of the press or newspapers was certainly different than the educated bourgeoisie's use, given their low-class origins and their hostile attitude towards the intellectual culture of the time,[120] which is the reason why Habermas excludes them from his "bourgeois-centric" public sphere of the revolution. Nevertheless, the sans-culottes were still able to imagine themselves as

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[118] Annie Geffroy, "Désignation, dénégation," p. 586; however, it is worth quoting Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 7, who writes about the French Revolution that "There was not […] a single politics of dress, but rather a spectrum of competing, dissonant interpretative ideas and beliefs"; for an example of the relation between the "nation" and the "sans-culottes," see Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 193, who talks about "Charles de Villette" who "ensures that this symbol operates on a national level," the symbol being the "*bonnets de laine*" (italics in the text).

[119] For an analysis of the origins of modern nationalism and the conditions of possibility of national consciousness, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Edition, London-New York, Verso, [1983] 2006, p. 1-46; in *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt also notices the link between cultural realities such as "the rise of the novel, the only entirely social art form" (p. 39) and the "'nation'," (p. 29), see also the interesting remarks in Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 277-278, note 24, and p. 149-150; about the relation between the "imagined community" and "'the disembodied public subject,'" see Benjamin Lee's summary of Michael Warner's argument in Benjamin Lee, "Textuality, Mediation, and Public Discourse," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 406-407, although the idea of "embodied sensibilities" is not explained in terms of clothing by Warner and Lee.

[120] Louis Bergeron in François Furet, Claude Mazauric and Louis Bergeron, "Les sans-culottes et la Révolution française," p. 1117; see also Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 245, where a quotation from a text seems to imply the incompatibility between the sans-culottes and "thorough education," although Wrigley does not elaborate on this point; however, see the interesting remark about the fact that "many poor Parisians read novels and news-sheets," etc in Jon Cowans, "Habermas and French History," p. 142, see also about "illiterate citizenry" and "symbolism," p. 149, although clothing is not mentioned.

belonging to a nation.[121]   Despite the fact that the sans-culottes had a variety of social backgrounds, they were still giving a "political unity" to their movement[122] and this unity found a significant ground in the symbolical clothing of the sans-culottes representing the nation in the public sphere.[123]

Since what the sans-culottes represented symbolically through their clothes was the majority of the population as opposed to the smaller group of aristocrats or bourgeois, they were representing not only the French nation in general but also a national community of equals. Therefore, what people were debating by coining expressions like "sans-culotte" was more the cultural and political identity of the French nation as an egalitarian society. As Mazauric says about the sans-culottes: "L'égalitarisme social est le trait essentiel de leur mentalité."[124] Equality was thus a value that the sans-culottes represented polemically by means of their clothes and this valuation of equality was directed against traditional hierarchies creating social classes. The

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[121] Many of them were able to read and write, and to take action through speech, and they were related to a lower bourgeoisie, see Louis Bergeron in François Furet, Claude Mazauric and Louis Bergeron, "Les sans-culottes et la Révolution française," p. 1117-1118; Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 123, mentions the importance of the "cockade" which also "continued to symbolize an ideal of national unity," which means that not only the sans-culottes were imagining themselves as representing the nation.

[122] Claude Mazauric in François Furet, Claude Mazauric and Louis Bergeron, "Les sans-culottes et la Révolution française," p. 1104, 1106, 1110.; Louis Bergeron in François Furet, Claude Mazauric and Louis Bergeron, "Les sans-culottes et la Révolution française," p. 1116; this confirms Geoff Eley's idea that "Habermas's oppositions of "educated/uneducated" and "literate/illiterate" simply don't work," although Eley gives different reasons and avoids the problem of clothing in the French Revolution, Geoff Eley, "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 305.

[123] See in Harold Mah, "Phantasies of the Public Sphere," p. 168, the interesting discussion of the "public sphere" as a "fiction" and "political imaginary," which is a description that could be compared to Benedict Anderson's idea of an "imagined community," even if "imaginary" and "imagined" are not synonymous, just like "public sphere" and "nation" overlap but are still two very different concepts; Craig Calhoun, "Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 8, mentions the parallel between Habermas's explanation of "print media" and "Anderson's analysis of 'print capitalism'"; Geoff Eley alludes to "the creation of local public spheres and their articulation with a national cultural and political arena," although without referring to the sans-culottes, in Geoff Eley, "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 296; John L. Brooke, "Reason and Passion in the Public Sphere," p. 46: mentions "Habermas's conception of the public sphere" and "Anderson's cognate framework of the nation as an 'imagined community'," and alludes to "material symbols," although without referring to the sans-culottes; see also Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 193, on the example of the "faubourg Saint-Antoine" and the "*bonnets de laine*" (italics in the text).

[124] Claude Mazauric, in François Furet, Claude Mazauric and Louis Bergeron, "Les sans-culottes et la Révolution française," p. 1105; see also on the importance of equality in "the *sans-culottes* both as a name and a political force," see Michael Sonenscher, *Sans-Culottes. An Eighteenth-Century Emblem*, p. 51 (italics in the text).

word sans-culottes even became "a symbol of class conflict,"[125] which invokes the revolutionary aspiration to equality in a hierarchy of classes in conflict.

When Habermas writes about the census in 19th century France that "die Französische Revolution nimmt ihn ja zum Maβstab der Unterscheidung von Aktiv- und Passiv-bürgern,"[126] clothing as another important marker of social differentiation or equalization is not envisioned. If it is true that the census was giving information and references for the process of hierarchizing society politically by those who were leading the revolution, it would be restrictive to dismiss the importance of the tradition of symbolical clothing in France in this hierarchizing of individuals between "active" or "passive citizens."[127] As Wrigley mentions, "dress […] became subject to intensive scrutiny,"[128] and there was an "importance invested in the public visibility of social difference,"[129] which means that being identified as a "passive" or "active citizen" in the revolution was significantly linked to clothing as it appeared in the public sphere, since "dress was looked to as an already differentiated resource for the reading of identities."[130] Moreover, the costume of the sans-culottes and the meaning ascribed to the expression were used as political means to articulate a discourse of equality against hierarchical distinctions,[131] such as

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[125] Michael Sonenscher, *Sans-Culottes. An Eighteenth-Century Emblem*, p. 342, Sonenscher specifies in parenthesis that "the classes in question were 'the bourgeoisie,' 'the mercantile class," or 'the property owners' on the one side, and 'the people," 'the class of workers,' 'the indigent, useful, and laborious class' on the other."

[126] Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, S. 108; Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 85.

[127] For example, Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 66, explains that there was the debate over "the Guard" and the price for "the acquisition of their uniform, a requirement which immediately highlighted social differences," and this problem of exclusion was intertwined with the subsequent abolition of "the distinction between 'active' and 'passive' citizens"; see also page 102 for an allusion to "active citizens" and the "cockade."

[128] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 10, and 232: clothing was important since there was in pre-revolutionary France "a hierarchical spectrum of dress codes," as catalogued by an aristocrat "in 1777."

[129] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 264, see also p. 86 on "official costume" vs. "equality."

[130] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 233: "Dress was universally understood as enshrining a complex of invitingly explicit moral and social indicators," see also p. 10: "dress as an indicator of identity," and on "The discourse of denunciation," "disguise" and "dissimulation"; Wrigley also mentions for instance the "*sans-culotte* costume" (italics in the text) and "calculated simulation" on p. 215, also p. 216, see also p. 232, etc; also p. 236 for an interesting general comment on "appearances" and "denunciation."

[131] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 238: in the spirit of "the ideological rationale for the adoption of *sans-culotte* costume," "The idea that dress could neither conceal nor alter ineffaceable social rank was politically

"Aktiv- und Passiv-bürger." The cardinal importance of a movement such as the sans-culottes and of its intertwinement with a tradition of political clothing making distinctions between "active" and "passive" citizens, between the different hierarchical positions ascribed to individuals or groups, reveals how limited Habermas's tracing of the origins of the modern public sphere is. The egalitarianism of the sans-culottes symbolized in their clothes is an eloquent example of a public critique of hierarchies. In this sense, one of the important means that enabled them to assert these values publically is obviously their dress code.

One of the characteristics of the vocabulary related to clothing is that in the French case people used the term "sans-culotte" to symbolically represent an ideal. Wearing the costume of the sans-culotte meant an affiliation with a conception of the revolution.[132] It stopped being an indication of whether someone was really from the low classes or not when someone was wearing the costume. As Annie Geffroy explains, "Le 'costume des sans-culottes' part d'un vêtement populaire, mais le transforme en symbole; il le fait décoller de ses déterminations sociales."[133] The language and vocabulary of the public sphere itself was rooted in a cultural heritage and tradition that had a sense of clothing differentiation and of its meaning in the process of "political self-identification,"[134] which came to be independent of the social origins of

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repugnant, in that it challenged the abolition of hierarchy that had been achieved by the Revolution" (italics in the text).

[132] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 215: the costume "or only some of its overall set of elements […] were enough to signify identification with a position at once political and rhetorical."

[133] Annie Geffroy, "Désignatino, dénégation," p. 586; Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 188, also quotes this passage from Annie Geffroy, see also page 7 where Wrigley writes that "none of the types of dress considered here have a simple, straightforwardly reconstitutable unitary identity"; see also on the flexible or "abusive" use of the term "sans-culottes," Michael Sonenscher, *Sans-Culottes. An Eighteenth-Century Emblem*, p. 358-361.

[134] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 188; see also Craig Calhoun, "Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 34, who refers to Habermas's "thinness of attention to matters of culture and the construction of identity," and by referring to Baker, says that Habermas "tends to typify epochs with little regard to national or other cultural specificity," see also p. 34, 37, although clothing is not mentioned by Calhoun; Habermas highlights the importance of "cultural traditions" in the public sphere, but clothing is still not mentioned by Habermas, see Habermas quoted in Craig Calhoun, "Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 48, note 52.

the wearer during the revolutionary era. In this sense, throughout the revolution and its public debate, "the name *sans-culottes*" came to be understood as "a republican emblem."[135] This emblem was thus a symbol that was destined to represent a political position without being a reference to the actual reality of the one who was wearing the piece of clothing. When Wrigley writes that "the wearing of *sans-culottes* costume was a minority practice,"[136] and that, according to research done on the revolution, "the artisans, shopkeepers, servants, and petty officials who made up the social core of revolutionary *sans-culottes*, in fact tended to wear breaches rather than *pantalon*,"[137] it shows the extent to which clothing was used as a highly symbolic "emblem" more than anything else.[138] Instead of being only a piece of clothing, the costume of the sans-culottes "emblematized" a form of republicanism for which the revolutionaries were fighting beyond social class origins, and which was also linked to an important traditional element in French culture, the "bonnet rouge."

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[135] Michael Sonenscher, *Sans-Culottes. An Eighteenth-Century Emblem*, p. 362 (italics in the text); when Nancy Fraser mentions in her critique of Habermas the importance of "social identities" and the "plurality of public arenas in which groups with diverse values and rhetorics participate," clothing is not mentioned, see Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 125-126; Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 215, writes that in pictorial arts "the representation of the *sans-culotte* was anything but consensual" (italics in the text), which confirms the extent to which it was an emblem to be debated.

[136] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 42, and p. 199, where Wrigley mentions that "it is rare to find *sans-culottes* included in the descriptions of festival programmes and processions," and writes a few sentences later on one specific "festival" that "it is likely that it was only the caps which were uniform" for the "*sans-culottes*" (italics in the text); I will discuss the cap bellow; see also in Wrigley p. 200 on the "*sans-culottes* costume […] probably confined principally to club meetings, and participation in deputations" (italics in the text), and p. 271; however, Michael Sonenscher, *Sans-Culottes. An Eighteenth-Century Emblem*, p. 342, mentions that "the Phrygian cap was widely adopted," which is a statement that is not specified by Sonenscher.

[137] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 221, note 42 (italics in the text).

[138] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 245, also emphasizes how it could be a "disguise."

The "bonnet rouge" and the Tradition in a Revolutionary World

The sans-culottes were not only identifying themselves by means of their pants as a symbol of their struggle against the tradition of aristocratic domination represented in clothing. They also used the "bonnet rouge" or red cap to signify their allegiance in the revolutionary turmoil.[139] This hat was a sign of the republicanism that the sans-culottes were advocating.[140] Habermas's account of the public sphere of the French Revolution does not mention the importance of the republican ideal symbolized publically by the sans-culotte movement and their red cap. As already mentioned, his accentuation of the heritage of the Enlightenment through the example of the Encyclopedia or the French "philosophes," does so that clothing as a traditional element in French society and group self-assertion is overlooked.

Even if the revolution has been a reaction to tradition in the context of modernity as Habermas demonstrates, it is clear that the republican red cap was a reference to the past and its clothing traditions that the French people preserved in the public sphere during the revolution.[141]

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[139] On the importance of the red cap for the sans-culotte, see for instance Michel Naudin, "La reaction culturelle en l'an III," p. 287, Michael Sonenscher, *Sans-Culottes. An Eighteenth-Century Emblem*, p. 57, and on the historical link between the expressions "flat-cap" and "sans-culottes," see p. 7; Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 135: the red cap was "part of the ensemble of the *sans-culottes*" (italics in the text), also on the difference between "*bonnet de la liberté, bonnet rouge*, and *bonnet phrygien*," see p. 136-149 (italics in the text), and Wrigley also explains that the red cap was also Jacobin for a short period, see p. 150-152, 197, etc, see also p. 229 where he writes that "the *bonnet rouge*" was "adopted by Jacobins in the spring of 1792" (italics in the text), and on the general context of clothing as a link to communities or as "allegiance," see p. 233.

[140] Jennifer Harris, "The Red Cap of Liberty," p. 286, although Harris does not use the term "republicanism" in this section of here text, her reference to values such as "liberty" and "Rome" invokes the republican ideal; Michael Sonenscher, *Sans-Culottes. An Eighteenth Century Emblem*, p. 273, quotes a French poster from 1793 on which the sans-culottes are associated with what is called "true republicans," and as Sonenscher remarks, "a *bonnet de laine*" and "a *sans-culottes*" "were used interchangeably," see p. 341 (italics in the text), see also p. 353; Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 245: "the *bonnet rouge*, this quintessentially republican emblem" (italics in the text), and for the link between the san-culottes and the red cap (or "bonnet de laine"), see Wrigley p. 163 and 197-198, 229, 245, where he writes: "In so far as the cap was a separate item, it lent itself to strategies which aimed to undermine its authority," etc.

[141] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 8-9: "The liberty cap brought with it a considerable historical and symbolic baggage, which sustained its central presence in revolutionary emblematics. This was primarily classical in origin, but also including an eclectic variety of historical precedents and parallels."

The tradition in which the red cap took its origin was Roman.[142] Jennifer Harris explains that the "bonnet rouge" had "been worn in Rome by freedmen as a sign of their new position."[143] It was the symbol of the ideal of freedom that the sans-culottes were trying to establish in the spirit of ancient Rome. The sans-culottes became aware of this potential use of Roman history in part through the medium of art, such as in plays and paintings, but also in public speeches.[144] Public celebrations and the press were also instances of the public sphere where a certain representation of Roman history appeared, i.e. where the red cap was represented.[145] The symbol of the red cap was even understood on the international scene as inextricably bound to the sans-culottes, hence the cardinal importance of the red cap.[146] The importance of the red cap is mentioned by Richard Wrigley when he talks about the red cap and the "prodigiously abundant range of comments on it across journalism, pamphlets, discourses, speeches and tracts, and also within different forms of imagery."[147] The presence of the red cap in the culture of revolutionary France cannot be

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[142] Without mentioning clothing, Michael Sonenscher writes that "so much of the political rhetoric of the period of the French Revolution took its cue so readily from ancient Greece or Rome," see Michael Sonenscher, *Sans-Culottes. An Eighteenth-Century Emblem*, p. 63, see the rest of the book for numerous examples, such as the more specific link between the sans-culottes and the heritage of antiquity with allusion to clothing in a text by Mercier on p. 106; see also Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 135: "Although the historical origins of the liberty cap are Roman, revolutionary commentaries provide a much more diverse – and frequently inconsistent – set of pedigrees for the emblem," see also Wrigley's comment on "contingency" in history, p. 167, a comment with which I agree; also for the sans-culottes associated with the "Romans," and their clothes with "the honorific Roman toga," p. 198 (with note 55), and the illustration on page 205, where "Brutus" (from Voltaire, see p. 206) is mentioned, as well as the other illustrations from p. 204-210 with the "representation" of "classical culture" (p. 207), the "Roman coiffure" (p. 209), etc; see also for an interesting contextual element in Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 27, and 64: "Roman antiquity, in whose school the revolutionary spirit was thought," also p. 111-112, 114, 150, 188-189, 200-203, 236, etc.
[143] Jennifer Harris, "The Red Cap of Liberty," p. 286, and Harris adds: "it was also worn by several different nations of antiquity and by various individuals"; see also the interesting allusion to the importance of the "cap of liberty" in Roman culture according to the 18th century author Wolban, Michael Sonenscher, *Sans-Culottes. An Eighteenth-Century Emblem*, p. 194-195, 340, also p. 341: the expression of the "*bonnets-de-laine*" "initially had a far wider currency than the better-known *sans-culottes*, if only because its direct association with the Roman republic made it a more immediately obvious political symbol" (italics in the text).
[144] Jennifer Harris, "The Red Cap of Liberty," p. 290.
[145] Jennifer Harris, "The Red Cap of Liberty," p. 290, does not emphasize the element of republicanism in her account; for the "name of *bonnet-de-laine*" and Prudhomme's "press campaign to turn it into a real political force" (italics in the text), see Michael Sonenscher, *Sans-Culottes. An Eighteenth-Century Emblem*, p. 341.
[146] Michel Jouve, "L'image du sans-culotte," p. 194; Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 161: "The cap's role as a signifier of French identity was consolidated by virtue of the publicity given to its proscription abroad," see also p. 162.
[147] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 9, see for other examples, such as plays, etc., p. 150-153.

neglected when such an "abundance" of references is found in historical research. The public sphere was thus testifying through various forms of media that the red cap was the object of interpretations in the debate and a means of political and symbolical "assertions," to use Wrigley's term.[148] The significance of dress as a dimension of the debate of the public sphere did so that the red cap was an "assertive" symbol in the revolutionary horizon.

The culture of clothing, in which the sans-culottes saw their name and ideology gain their meaning, was compatible with the collectivist aspect of their republicanism: "Dress was not a matter of individual choice, but rather of collective identification"[149] and the red cap became "a national republican emblem."[150] What defined Roman republicanism was that the Romans of the republic understood freedom as going hand in hand with collective virtue in contrast to the freedom and virtue of one individual, that is to say, of the emperor or the king.[151] Wearing the red cap meant that people were ready to fight collectively against tyranny and monarchy just like the Romans had done in the historical past. The republican heritage of Roman history in the French national imagination was thus used by the sans-culottes when representations of republican freedom were staged. This republican vision was what they shared with the Romans and the significance of the Roman cap in the public sphere appeared "most famously on 20 June

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[148] See also Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 229, where Wrigley says that the red cap was "an instrument of partisan provocation."

[149] Leora Auslander, "Regeneration Through the Everyday?," p. 231; on the link between republican Rome, the sans-culottes, and the "liberty cap," see Michael Sonenscher, *Sans-Culottes. An Eighteenth-Century Emblem*, p. 8, and on republicanism and the sans-culottes, see p. 21, 342; see also Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 152, on the red cap similar to the cockade "as a rallying sign for popular mobilization," and p. 187 where he mentions the link between the sans-culottes and "the use of vestimentary vocabulary to identify a distinctive mode of collective political identity," and p. 203: "representations of 'le peuple' were always collective, never individualized."

[150] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 150, see also p. 197 where Wrigley writes that "*bonnets de laine* and *sans-culottes*" were "collective terms" (italics in the text).

[151] Michael Sonenscher, *Sans-Culottes. An Eighteenth-Century Emblem*, p. 342: "the mixture of military and civil service symbolized by the liberty cap, with its Roman republican connotations"; Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 209, where he mentions "republican virtue" as it relates to "the idea of the *sans-culottes*" (italics in the text); Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 65, for a different view on "virtue," which could be debated, see also p. 189, where she writes that for "The men of the revolutions," "the great model and precedent [...] was [...] the Roman republic and the grandeur of its history."

1792, when Louis XVI was forced to put one on."[152] Whether this specific gesture came to be in favor of the sans-culottes or not, the political map of the revolution now included the sans-culottes.[153] It is from 1792 that the liberty cap became a well-established symbol in the revolution,[154] in particular during the "festivals of Federation."[155] What Habermas missed when referring to this year of 1792 and to the "Sturm auf die Tuilerien,"[156] is that these actions were revealing once more how central clothing was for the understanding of the public sphere: the public figure *par excellence* of the Ancien Régime, the king of France, had to participate in the course of the revolution through the dress culture of the public sphere, and the population itself was embracing this dress culture to construct its own public sphere.

Habermas's accent on the modern aspect of the notion of public sphere prevents him from observing the strong continuity between the Roman traditions of clothing that the sans-culottes exalted with their red cap in the public arena. For instance, when Habermas selects passages of a constitutional text from 1793 in revolutionary France, he chooses to comment on the break with tradition that the revolutionaries were trying to operate. Habermas sheds light on the rupture

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[152] Michael Sonenscher, *Sans-Culottes. An Eighteenth-Century Emblem*, p. 342; the interpretations of this gesture is very diverse and would require too much research and argumentation to take a position in the debate, and therefore, I mention this anecdote to show the importance of clothing in the public sphere, see Richard Wrigley's excellent account of "20 June 1792" in Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 154-158, 245, and p. 166 where he writes in conclusion that it "did much to highlight the way in which a simple item of common dress had come to play an intensely complex role as a touchstone for partisan attitudes to the replacement of royal authority," see also p. 234, and note 62, on the importance of dress for the other people involved.

[153] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 196: "for the *Révolution de Paris*, 20 June became the 'Journée des sans-culottes'. The notion of *sans-culottes* as a mobilized collectivity was thus named, at least in reported form" (italics in the text), see also p. 198; however, as Wrigley writes on p. 229, the "claims to official status" of the red cap was "divisive."

[154] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 135: "Although present in imagery and in emblematic form from 1789, it was not worn to any significant degree until the spring of 1792," see also about the importance of the "*bonnet rouge*" in 1792, p. 150, as well as p. 219 note 25 where he talks about 1792 and "the militant *sans-culottes* and Jacobins for whom the *bonnet rouge* had, by this date, become a rallying sign" (italics in the text), see also p. 229 for the Jacobins, and p. 241.

[155] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 146, I use in this sentence the expression "liberty cap" since Wrigley makes a distinction between "*bonnet de la liberté*" and "*bonnets de laine* or *bonnet rouge*" (italics in the text), see also p. 245 where Wrigley writes that "the *bonnet rouge* […] was predominantly worn in specific quasi-official locations" (italics in the text), etc, see also note 74.

[156] Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, S. 91, Habermas refers to the "Sturm auf die Tuilerien" "Im August"; Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 71.

with traditional monarchy by taking into account the French conception of "der frischen Erinnerung des Despotismus."[157] Accordingly, the tradition embodied by the monarchy was the element of French society that the revolution wanted to reject. From this perspective, Habermas seems to assume that the development of a modern public sphere in revolutionary France is strictly an antithesis of tradition.[158] However, when one considers the debate about clothing in the public sphere of the revolution as underscored above,[159] the link between the modern texts of law and tradition springs up. The dynamics of clothing in the public sphere is thereby a crucial element that reveals the reassertion of Roman traditions at the heart of modernity and its aspiration to the definition of a public sphere of political debate. This presence of traditional values in modernity is something Hannah Arendt discovered while alluding to the problem of clothing in the public sphere of the revolution in France.[160]

Although Arendt also stresses the modern revolutionary "pathos of novelty,"[161] she writes that "modern revolutions [...] can be characterized by Marx's remark that the French Revolution

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[157] Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, S. 91; Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 71.

[158] When Geoff Eley writes that "The emergence of a bourgeois public was never defined solely by the struggle against absolutism and traditional authority," the case of the sans-culottes and the French Revolution is not mentioned, see Geoff Eley, "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 306.

[159] Jennifer Harris, "The Red Cap of Liberty," p. 311.

[160] Seyla Benhabib, "Models of Public Space," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 85-86, although Benhabib stresses other texts by Habermas, her account of Habermas's understanding of tradition is not criticized nor explained in relation to Arendt and clothing; without any reference to Arendt or clothing, see Keith Michael Baker on the link tradition-modernity-public opinion in French history, in Keith Michael Baker, "Defining the Public Sphere," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 198 and 191-197; see also Lloyd Kramer's account of Baker on the tradition-modernity "continuities" in respect to public opinion, Lloyd Kramer, "Habermas, History, and Critical Theory," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 243; Habermas does not really account for this tradition-modernity continuity in his treatment of the French Revolution, see Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*, p. 67-71, Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, p. 87-92.

[161] Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 24: "Only where this pathos of novelty is present and where novelty is connected with the idea of freedom are we entitled to speak of revolution," also p. 63, and p. 28: "no matter how much the men of the revolutions might admire the splendour that was Rome, none of them would have felt at home in antiquity as Machiavelli did," see also the reference to "clothing" in a quotation right after, and p. 32, where Arendt mentions the "disinclination for novelty which still echoes in the very word 'revolution'," and the use, on p. 27, of expressions such as "the specific revolutionary pathos of the absolutely new," etc.

appeared on the stage of history in Roman costume."[162] Although Arendt's reference to clothing

in the expression "Roman costume" is not part of a study on the history of clothing, and although

she probably uses the expression as a metaphor with a certain reference to reality, it is striking

that the allusion to this Roman costume in its literal sense is completely compatible with her

thesis about the continuity between the French Revolution and Roman traditions in France as

well as with the tradition of the red cap. Arendt thus thinks that the revolutionary project of

modernity as concretized in the French Revolution took elements of the tradition to fight against

what they interpreted as undesirable in the political community. And more importantly for my

argument, this "Roman costume" as a symbol of tradition was a component of the revolution that

was conceivable on what she calls "the stage of history." By definition, a "stage" is the locus

where the actors of a play "appear," as Arendt would put it. In the case of Roman clothing in

revolutionary France, it seems clear that Arendt is using the expression "stage of history" to

designate the public aspect of the event and thus to the public sphere conceived historically.[163]

She is saying in her own way that the debate on the public sphere of the French Revolution

incorporated the Roman tradition as an authority,[164] and as we know, this was done by means of

a staged "politics of appearances," to use Wrigley's title. This reasoning can be directly applied

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[162] Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 139; Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 41, also refers to this; Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 52, note 92, writes: "On the metaphor of dressing up in historical clothes as a means of facilitating 'living the past', and thereby confronting the problems of the contemporary world, see Stephen Bann's discussion of Macchiavelli, and Marx's assessment, in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*, of the limitations of French revolutionaries' adoption of Roman costume and phrases" (italics in the text).

[163] Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 197-198, uses the expression "stage of history," also p. 303 note 39 while quoting an author; Harold Mah, "Phantasies of the Public Sphere," p. 175, quotes Furet who uses the expression "stage of history," although the term is not discussed; Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 187, also uses similar expressions such as "the revolutionary stage," or on p. 190, "political stage," or p. 216, "the stage of revolutionary politics," although the concept is not discussed; the notion of "stage" could be a topic of further discussion, see Wrigley who writes about "the theater's role as a particularly prominent aspect of public space" on p. 237: "For all the artifice associated with the stage, the social and political signification of the actors and their costumes was assimilated to, and continuous with, the spectacle of dress-as-identity visible in the street, café, and club," and for a link to the sans-culottes, see p. 238; Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 96 also mentions the importance of "the language of the theater" in revolutionary France, see also p. 97-98, and p. 188 about "Roman antiquity" and "the French Revolution, whose agents had indeed an extraordinary flair for the theatrical."

[164] However, this Arendtian perspective can be partly attenuated by the research done by Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 141, who writes that during "The Thermidorian Reation," "Classical names had lost their authority through having become too familiar as alibis for butchery and disorder."

to the case of the costume and the red cap of the sans-culottes, since they appeared in the public sphere in a very significant way on the "stage of history" and thereby on the "public sphere."

Unlike Habermas's account of the modern public sphere, Arendt deciphers in the narrative of French and Roman history the repetition of the expulsion of the monarchy as a sign of the dependence of modernity on tradition. Her example of the "Roman costume" confirms her interpretation and the red cap of the sans-culottes strengthens this confirmation. The red cap as a symbol of political struggle is an attestation that "the revolutions of the modern age appear like gigantic attempts […] to renew the broken thread of tradition."[165] In light of this, if revolutionaries such as the sans-culottes were trying to redefine their identity and freedoms through political discourse and daily symbols like clothing with reference to antiquity, one can conclude that the revolutionary ideal in France was in search of a tradition that their monarchic authority did not represent legitimately any longer. For example, in a public celebration during the revolution there was a "political rhetoric" indicating that "the active role of the ordinary inhabitants of the faubourg Saint-Antoine was given a dignified cultural legitimacy by reference to a Roman emblem."[166] This can be interpreted as an attempt to represent in their clothing the authority[167] of Roman republican freedom as a revitalized tradition. By virtue of the traditional past of Rome speaking through French history, their revolutionary position was legitimate in the public sphere.

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[165] Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 140; this is something Jennifer Harris, "The Red Cap of Liberty," p. 310, did not emphasize enough; see also Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 146-147, 149.
[166] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 193, the celebration was "the pantheonization of Voltaire" in "July 1791" (p. 192); Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 252: "The loss of authority in the powers-that-be, which indeed precedes all revolutions, is actually a secret to no one."
[167] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 250: Wrigley links clothing and authority, but does not give examples, when he alludes to the "legislative attempts to restrict the wearing of the signs of official authority," see also Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 241, where he mentions the "deviant badge and dress code" as influencing "revolutionary authority," which confirms the link between "authority" and "clothing."

Moreover, the general assemblage of clothes selected by the sans-culottes in their will to represent their ideals publically was also in certain public ceremonies a means to criticize the Christian heritage of France. As is well known, this tradition, like that of the monarchy, did not possess its full legitimacy any longer for the egalitarian and revolutionary sans-culottes.[168] But in spite of this critique of Christianity, the sans-culottes fused the red cap as their revolutionary symbol with other symbols of the traditional religion of France in their polemical arts being staged in the public sphere.[169] Just as the Romans had done, the sans-culottes's revolutionary clothes in their political struggle were re-establishing not only the authority of tradition in politics, but also the authority of religious symbols as a traditional stabilizing force in politics.[170] To recapitulate, the events led to the adoption of clothing symbols and to the articulation of discourses in the revolutionary public sphere that took their roots in "the Roman trinity of religion, tradition and authority."[171] This shows that a clear point of entry into the examination of the traditional reality of modernity highlighted by Arendt consists in the culture of clothing signified by the sans-culottes and their red cap. This is the context of the modern public sphere

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[168] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 199: "*Sans-culotte* costume also appears in the carnivalesque festivals and processions associated with dechristianization. In these, it was often worn under religious vestments which were to be cast off, revealing the 'true' *sans-culotte* beneath," (italics in the text), however, the link with the context of Roman republican history is not made by Wrigley on this point; see also Michael Sonenscher, *Sans-Culottes. An Eighteenth-Century Emblem*, p. 355, note 179, on "examples of Christ as a *sans-culottes*" (italics in the text); Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 152.

[169] James Leith, "Images of the *Sans-Culottes*," p. 144, Leith gives examples in pictorial arts of "classical and Judeo-Christian traditions"; see also Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 24, who writes that "Daniel Arasse has noted the echoes of Christ's passion in descriptions of the cutting up of Louis XVI's jacket," which shows the importance of clothing in the public sphere of the Revolution in relation to religion, see also p. 198 where "Christ" is mentioned, among other figures, in relation to sans-culotte culture.

[170] Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 175. If it is true to say that the sans-culottes represented "le peuple," as mentioned above, on can also say that there was also "a deification of the people in the French Revolution."

[171] Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 140; Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 108, see also p. 137, 146, 150-154, 175-184, 186, 188, 190, 192-193, 199; when Claude Mazauric, in François Furet, Claude Mazauric and Louis Bergeron, "Les sans-culottes et la Révolution française," p. 1106 says that "l'idéologie sans-culotte se nourrit de la croyance à l'âge d'or d'un passé mythique," he fails to mention the Roman tradition; see also Craig Calhoun, "Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 35, who mentions "Habermas's neglect of religion, noted by Zaret," a critique that Calhoun applies to French "Enlightenment thinkers" on page 36, although the French Revolution and clothing are still avoided; Seyla Benhabib, "Models of Public Space," in Craig Calhoun (edited by), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 76 quotes a passage from Arendt where it is said that "The loss of this trinity" gives "a *fragmented* past" (italics in the text) from which we can draw as moderns, which could be applied in this paper to the red cap as a historical fragment used in the public sphere.

where "Revolutionaries thus built on the old and the new, the discursive and the material, in their efforts to turn monarchists into republicans through dress."[172]

The other perspective from which a continuity between the revolution and tradition appears is the tradition of clothing in France. Calling publically a popular political group "sans-culottes" with symbols such as the "red cap" was extending a tradition that the revolution was endorsing and trying to rearticulate. As Auslander has noted, "This focus on clothing as a political domain was not new with the Revolution; clothing had long been politicized in France."[173] The sans-culottes as a political group had a meaningful denomination as well as meaningful vestimentary tools, such as the red cap, in the context of the modern French revolutionary public sphere especially because of the national tradition in which they arose. Not only the clothes themselves, but the lexical apparatus of politics related to clothing was itself anchored in the past.[174] Wrigley writes that there were "pre-existing conventions for representing men of the people in the later Ancien Régime and the early Revolution not only feed into the *sans-culotte* stereotype, but remain essential to its meaning."[175] The French culture of clothing as a precondition of the sans-culottes provided a general context of significations in which they could use clothing

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[172] Leora Auslander, "Regeneration Through the Everyday?," p. 232; for a stress on the continuity between "the economics of the French Revolution," ancient republicanism and thought, see Michael Sonenscher, *Sans-Culottes. An Eighteenth-Century Emblem*, p. 3-4, although clothing is not mentioned; see also Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 9: "The liberty cap became a site for the negotiation of variant meanings, in which past and present are simultaneously elided and in collision."

[173] Leora Auslander, "Regeneration Through the Everyday?," p. 231; see also Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 2, and p. 188, where Wrigley mentions the "pre-existing discourse" and that "a set of conventions for representing men of the people already existed, which it was possible to harness to new political ends," and p. 232 where Wrigley says that "dress had long been read as a sign of identity and status," and that the "importance" of clothing "was only possible because of the existence of what Daniel Roche has termed the Ancien Régime's elaborate 'culture of appearances'. This had provided an established set of assumptions about the legibility of identity and status through varieties of dress."

[174] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 191: the "political language predominantly relied on changing the meaning of already existing terms."

[175] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 190 (italics in the text), see also p. 3 where Wrigley mentions, when referring to historical scholarship on clothing, that there were "transformations worked by the Revolution on the inherited 'vestimentary system' of the Ancien Régime."

politically.[176] This "significant degree of continuity with inherited protocols for dealing with the

representation of men of the people"[177] in revolutionary France, and the continuity between "the

Ancien Régime's elaborate 'culture of appearances'"[178] and the revolution's own "politics of

appearances," is what I interpret as a central instance of Arendt's insistence on the continuity[179]

between tradition and revolution through the "Roman costume" and its red cap appearing on the

"stage of history." The way people dressed in the revolution would not have made sense in the

public sphere without a tradition conditioning the actual cultural situation of revolutionary

politics.

Therefore, when Habermas said about the Middle Ages that "Tugend muβ sich verkörpern,

muβ sich öffentlich darstellen lassen können,"[180] it could have been applied as well to the culture

of clothing in the French Revolution and its historical preconditions.   The heritage of dress

codifications of the "Ancien Régime," in which virtue or "Tugend" was "embodied" in material

culture, was still used in the Revolution to articulate the direction of events as well as to attribute

"meaning" to those events.   It is from this traditional political custom that, in the spirit of the

sans-culottes, "true patriotic virtue could be expressed by the adoption of a costume."[181]

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[176] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 9: "The coming into existence of the *sans-culottes* in its new revolutionary meaning is, of course, dependent on a more widespread politicisation of dress" (italics in the text).
[177] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 190.
[178] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 190, Wrigley also writes that the revolutionary "habits of surveillance," i.e. those regarding clothing, "are entirely consistent with police practices regularly employed in the Ancien Régime."
[179] See this interesting statement by Patrice Rolland, "Robespierre ou la foundation impossible," in *Le Débat*, 1992/1 no. 68, p. 43: "La « perfectibilité » soutenue par B. Constant privilégie la continuité historique et sociologique sur la rupture politique," although Rolland's article is not on the sans-culottes, and mentions Arendt in an another respect.
[180] Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, S. 21; Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 8.
[181] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 9, Habermas's treatment of "badges" or "Abzeichen" during the Middle Ages as explained in the previous section of my argumentation could be applied to the French Revolution itself and its public sphere, see Richard Wrigley's account in *The Politics of Appearances* in the first chapters, where for instance, on page 16, he writes about "the creation of a new generation of revolutionary badges, which replaced forms of official medal and badge current during the Ancien Régime," see also p. 59-61, where he talks about the "badge culture" (p. 61) during the revolution, also p. 71.

However, the sans-culottes had a relation to the past that was twofold: they were accepting elements of the tradition but they were also opposing other elements of it. In one of his formulas describing the red cap, Wrigley puts in apposition the red cap and the idea that it was a "polemical political headgear, associated with protest and provocation."[182] The red cap was that which could bring together opposition ("protest and provocation") to tradition on the one hand, and retention of this same traditional context on the other, since the red cap came from a tradition. By means of the red cap oppositional modernity and the traditional past cohabitate on the "stage of history," as Arendt would have it. The notion of the "uniform" pointed out by historians can further illustrate this duality brought up by the red cap.

Harris describes the costume of the sans-culottes and their red cap as a phenomenon close to the idea of "a popular political uniform."[183] Given that "Uniforms […] were strongly associated with hierarchy,"[184] Harris's reference to the "bonnet rouge" as a form of "uniform" implies that the sans-culottes were trying to formulate a symbolical critique of tradition by dissociating the notion of "uniform" from hierarchies, or from what could be called the "hierarchy of appearances."[185] As the use of the red cap shows, the dress culture of the sans-culottes replaced the traditional idea of uniform and came to be interpreted as an anti-hierarchical uniform, invoking a nationalistic type of egalitarianism and republicanism.[186] However, the uniform still

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[182] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 158.

[183] Jennifer Harris, "The Red Cap of Liberty," p. 308; see also about the sans-culottes and the revolutionary army, Michael Sonenscher, *Sans-Culottes. An Eighteenth-Century Emblem*, p. 55, although clothing is not emphasized by Sonenscher; on the notion of "military uniform" during the revolution, see Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 64-70.

[184] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 64, see also p. 266.

[185] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 230, Wrigley uses this expression in the following sentence: "In the nascent revolutionary order, established beliefs in the reliability of a hierarchy of appearances were profoundly shaken."

[186] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 74: criticisms about material signs of distinction related to clothing "are consistent with the rhetoric of virtuous transparency and the repudiation of compromising external self-adornment at the heart of the new ideology accompanying the consolidation of the *sans-culottes'* political prominence" (italics in the text), although Wrigley does not address the red cap in this section of his book, except for allusions on pages 75 and 76; on the uniform and politics, see also p. 79.

has a connotation related to a Roman tradition, but at the same time the red cap as a

revolutionary uniform was trying to abolish the hierarchical element of this tradition.[187] It was

fighting with tradition against tradition: through this uniform, modernity and tradition stood right

beside each other in the "space of appearances" of the public sphere. It is from this perspective

that the red cap amalgamates the "Roman uniform" of traditions, against hierarchies in society,

and the revolutionary aspiration to modern oppositional politics, also against hierarchized human

relations.

However, to come back to Habermas and Arendt's "space of appearance," the importance of

the sans-culotte costume and its red cap was intimately bound to a fundamental ambiguity. "The

history of the stereotype of the *sans-culotte* has shown that, even in the case of this most pungent

form of militant socio-political style, appearances could be deceptive."[188] As Wrigley notes,

dress had been used to hide identities between appearances and this situation of ambiguous signs

made politicians react strongly against the notion of appearance in the public sphere.[189] The

centrality of the "space of appearances" as ambiguous is that which Habermas's rationalistic

interpretation of the revolution misses, whereas Arendt stresses significantly in *The Human*

Condition the ambiguity of appearances in the public sphere, and although without emphasizing

the case of clothing sufficiently, she still delves into historical examples in *On Revolution* to

support her convincing argument that "In politics, more than anywhere else, we have no

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[187] On the critique of "simplicity of dress" "After Thermidor" as it relates to hierarchies involved by this "simplicity," see Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 200.

[188] Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances*, p. 229-230 (italics in the text), see also p. 249, where Wrigley highlights "the general problem of making sense of the fluctuating and fragmented forms of publicly visible political culture as it was experienced in terms of the spectacle of social interaction," see also p. 263, with illustrations of clothing, but without the sans-culottes (p. 261-265), and p. 215-216, Wrigley uses expressions such as "exterior appearances and interior moral identity" (p. 246), here in relation to "gender"; see also Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 282 note 32, where Robespierre talking about "dissimulation" is quoted, although without mention of clothing, see also p. 86-88, etc.

[189] Although clothing is not addressed, see for an interesting analysis of Robespierre's reaction Patrice Rolland, "Robespierre ou la foundation impossible," p. 44-46, 53-57 in particular, and with a reference to Arendt on page 43.

possibility of distinguishing between being and appearance."[190] If the public sphere as a "space of appearances" is historically in greater conformity with what actually happened in the French Revolution as an instance of the modern understanding of publicness, Wrigley's empirical research on the other hand did not delve into the theoretical approach that arose from the revolution.

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[190] Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 88, see also the following pages for Arendt's philosophical elaboration; much more could be said about Arendt and "appearance," for instance in another text, she makes a distinction between "public" and "political" when mentioning "appearances," in Hannah Arendt, *Introduction* into *Politics*, translated by John E. Woods, in Hannah Arendt, *Promise of Politics*, Edited with and Introduction by Jerome Kohn, New York, Schocken Books, 2005, p. 123, or her reference to "a space for appearance," "a space for display," on p. 140, see also p. 166-168, although I may have read this text by Arendt only for the pages indicated, see bibliography.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have examined Habermas's notion of the public sphere in relation to his account of the French revolution in his book *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*. My critique of Habermas takes as its starting point the lack of attention paid by Habermas to political groups that did not belong properly speaking to the bourgeois class, and focusses on the case of the sans-culottes as a counter-example. The historians who wrote on clothing and that I take into account to evaluate Habermas's argument do not include sufficiently the contribution of political theory in their historical research, and the political theorists I also take into account do not go into the details of historical research on clothing satisfyingly. Even if Habermas himself mentions that he intentionally neglects the plebeian aspect of the event of the modern public sphere, scholars have insisted on the limited perspective from which he considers modern history in *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*. In this sense, the theoretical and normative element is contrasted by the critics with the empirical element, which points in the direction of my critique that Habermas's account of the public sphere is historically too selective. Moreover, it has been mentioned in the scholarship that updated historical research has an "unfair advantage," as Eley says, but I still explore the possibilities opened up by Habermas's concept of the "public sphere" to push it further in light of historical findings. It is worth noting as well that Habermas talks only briefly about the French Revolution and that there is a strongly theoretical element in the revolution itself, as Arendt would put it, which seems to reappear in Habermas. In spite of that, I maintain that excluding the non-bourgeois element of modern politics leads to a form of bourgeois-centrism that reduces significantly the realm of the public sphere to linguistic communication. In this thesis I thus explore how the symbolical dynamic of the public sphere was active through the clothing culture of the sans-culottes, and while acknowledging

Habermas's critique of his own book, I insist on how he did not perceive the importance of clothing in the French revolutionary public sphere as it relates to the sans-culottes.

The first part of my thesis elaborates a critical comparison between Habermas and Arendt on the public sphere. Habermas mentions at the beginning of *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* the Greek notion of the public sphere with a reference to Arendt. Indeed, their accounts of the public sphere contain parallels: they both adopt a normative standpoint and they explore the link between the impact of different types of societies on the modern public sphere. However, their theories of the public sphere differ significantly: Habermas endorses a rationalistic conception of the public sphere based on the Enlightenment and its culture of rational argumentation, whereas Arendt describes the public sphere as a "space of appearance," which indicates that the public sphere cannot be reduced to rational argumentation. Arendt takes the example of the sans-culottes and their clothes to insist on the importance of appearance in the public sphere. Arendt's "space of appearance" includes the concrete fact that attending a debate in person with material symbols attached to the individual is highly significant, as opposed to Habermas's focus on rational and more abstract argumentation. The compatibility between this stress on appearance with the example of clothing in Arendt and Warner's study of "bodily representations" is avoided by Habermas, who dismisses too quickly the relevance of a cultural studies approach to the public sphere. Habermas's notion of the public sphere seems to be limited to be a contribution to a normative theory of democracy, whereas Arendt's and Warner's accounts suggest a much more broad-ranging perspective for the study of the history of the public realm of human relations.

In addition to the fact that Arendt's approach to the public sphere, as well as the approach of other authors such as Michael Warner, is more open to understanding the public sphere by

considering cultural history and cultural studies, Arendt's political theory insists on the world of material objects or "things" that appear in the public sphere. Arendt thus elaborates on her notion of publicness by explaining that what exists between individuals in a community consists in part in material objects. This extends her example of the clothes of the sans-culottes as carrying significations in the public sphere. Arendt's conception of work leads her to explain that fabricated objects have meanings and are part of what makes the worldly space where a public debate can take place, and clothing are certainly among these objects of the human world at the basis of the public sphere. Unlike Habermas, her emphasis on objects that appear also articulate the idea that what is "public" is accessible to "everybody," which shows how compatible her approach is with a study of the material culture of the public sphere and its relation to the non-bourgeois classes. In spite of this sensitivity to material culture in Arendt, she does not explore the extent to which material culture and its clothing aspect are bound to symbolical meaning, which is part of how individuals recognize each other. Habermas himself mentions the importance of what is symbolical, but this is not part of his account of the French Revolution. Arendt goes on to say that objects made by humans are part of a world of conventions and significations. This is what can be applied to clothing as meaningful objects providing a material aspect to the public sphere and its debate, since clothing as something that is "talked about" brings the individual out into the public world to be recognized in some way. The use of speech in the community is linked to this world of objects including clothing and through speech material culture finds one of its ways to the public realm of political debate.

The second part of my thesis examines how Habermas started his investigation on the public sphere by taking into account the culture of clothing in the Middle Ages. Habermas explains how hierarchies were represented symbolically and shows that the medieval aristocracy had attributes represented on their clothes, such as emblems, badges, or clothes that were displayed

publically. These symbols gave publicity to their position of power in their community and as attributes they were a means of representation of how power was distributed in society. Habermas also mentions how these symbolical clothes or elements of clothing were making their "virtues" and values public. However, given that this presence of clothing in the Middle Ages was not part of a culture of public debate through written and oral speech, Habermas leaves behind the issue of public representation by means of clothing. The case of the French Revolution provides an example that shows how Habermas missed an important aspect of the public importance of clothing.

The third part of my thesis proposes to read Habermas's subsequent analysis of the French Revolution in order to contrast it with his findings about the Middle Ages. Habermas totally avoids addressing this tradition of clothing at work in the public sphere of the revolution since he conceives the revolution as a continuation of the rationalistic ambitions of the Enlightenment and its culture of oral and written public debate. Habermas's public sphere takes the form of a "space of rationality" instead of a "space of appearance," to use Arendt's expression, which in my opinion made Habermas dismiss the question of clothing for his interpretation of modern history. Arendt's emphasis on the space of appearance and Wrigley's historical study on the revolutionary "politics of appearances" open the way to the investigation into the public sphere of the French Revolution in a way that includes more than just the bourgeoisie and written and oral speech. Habermas only comments on the fight for the "freedom of expression" and its consequences in legislation, whereas the historical scholarship shows how important clothing was in revolutionary France: it appears in law-making, festivals, societies, debates of the Jacobin club, art, etc. For that reason, understanding the debate of the public sphere of the revolution requires an account of clothing. As Wrigley has shown, the importance of clothing in the debate of the French Revolution cannot be dismissed since it was significantly part of its "political

culture." An eloquent and significant case of the presence of a clothing culture of debate in the public sphere during the revolution that Habermas missed is the sans-culottes. The sans-culottes identified negatively as non-nobles and thus as wearing no aristocratic pants. They represented the people in general as opposed to the ruling minority of the higher classes and their clothing was one of the means that enabled them to take part in the public debate. Through the sans-culottes and their dress culture, the lower uneducated classes were given a voice through the material culture of political symbols, and this method of participation was accessible to everyone. In this context, clothing was used by the sans-culottes in the public sphere to symbolize the national community to which they felt they belonged, given that the sans-culottes had the cultural conditions to imagine themselves as representing the nation. Their clothes were also a symbol of their egalitarianism that came along with their nationalism. Habermas's account of the revolution's debate on equality is limited to the census as a means of distinguishing between "passive" and "active" citizens, whereas this type of hierarchical distinction also depended on clothing as the egalitarianism of the sans-culottes shows. However, although the culture of clothing was indicating the political identity of a person, it became an emblem that enabled anyone to endorse that identity, without any link to the social or political origin of the wearer. The sans-culotte costume was thus a political emblem that anyone could use.

The fourth part of my thesis addresses how the sans-culottes, as important actors in the public sphere, used the republican symbol of the red cap to get involved in the revolution, an element avoided by Habermas. They took the idea to the public sphere from a certain reading of Roman history where the red cap signified republican freedom. The red cap was significantly present in the public sphere's world of appearances, as Wrigley mentioned, and became a symbol used, asserted, and interpreted in the debate. The collectivist aspect of republicanism was contained in

the symbolical meaning of the red cap and this was reminiscent of Roman republican history. The story of the king being "forced to put one on," in Sonenscher's terms, is an example that illustrates the centrality of clothing in the debate of the public sphere in the presence of the sans-culottes. Habermas's emphasis on the break with tradition initiated by modernity prevented him from noticing that this republican red cap of the sans-culottes was actually reasserting an ancient tradition at the heart of a revolutionary modernity. Arendt stresses this continuity between modernity and tradition by mentioning the "Roman costume" in France's revolutionary "stage of history." The revolution in France was thus endorsing in its public sphere, where history found its "stage," the political culture of clothing from ancient Rome. Moreover, the Roman tradition through clothing was indicating that the sans-culotte's importance was legitimate in the debate. The red cap was also connected to the sans-culottes's symbolical and revolutionary re-articulation of the traditional religion of their own culture. Therefore, this exploration of the culture of clothing in the revolution confirms Arendt's thesis on modern revolutions in which the invocation of the "Roman trinity of religion, tradition and authority" cannot be avoided. The link between tradition and the modernity of revolution is also expressed by the fact that French history carried with it a traditional culture of clothing in politics through language and dress. This was influencing the world of significations of the revolutionary present for the sans-culottes, which corroborates once more Arendt's thesis. The public sphere of the revolution was thus preconditioned to use clothing given its national history. From this perspective, Habermas's analysis of clothing in the Middle Ages could be applied to the French Revolution. The red cap also expressed a duality between tradition and modernity in the revolutionary public sphere: it was a sign of revolutionary opposition to tradition but it was also a sing of retention of tradition. Since scholars such as Harris mention the red cap as a form of "political uniform," one can say that the hierarchical element of the notion of uniform was removed but that tradition was

retained since the red cap was traditionally Roman: the red cap shows that modernity and tradition have to be understood together. However, the importance and significance of clothing in the debate of the French Revolution cannot be separated from the fact that the signification of clothing was ambiguous, which is what Habermas did not perceive due to his rationalistic account of the public sphere. Since people could use clothing to hide their identity, and since "being and appearance" cannot be understood as separate in politics as Arendt writes, conceiving the public sphere as a "space of appearance" enables a broader understanding of the public debate of the French Revolution.

It seems that Habermas studies the French Revolution from its bourgeois component because he himself seems to hide his identity behind the appearance of the modern bourgeois. However, it also seems that Habermas does not pose the question of appearances in politics, as Arendt and Wrigley do, partly because his pants or clothes do not pose any problem. As an academic, he does not have to think considerably about how he appears with his clothes, since he has enough room in his schedule to think mainly about the next argument. "The politics of appearances," to use Wrigley's insightful title, as if he had read Arendt, is a reality in which Habermas himself has to take position as an author and he takes this position by appearing through his book as an academic interested in literature, philosophy, or rational arguments, just like the bourgeois from modern history, whose appearance can be contrasted with the appearance of the sans-culotte. However, he seems to forget that, even if behind his appearance there is only probably another appearance, as many philosophers would put it, this other appearance is more multifaceted than Habermas seems to imply. What I am trying to suggest it that, behind Habermas's appearance as a bourgeois, there is still the appearance of the "normal guy," who can, or should be able to, see his own self in the sans-culottes, that is, in the sans-culottes who knew that not only rational argumentation is part of the public sphere, and that taking part in a political debate can also

include clothing to signify, to oppose, to express, to reinforce speech, to disagree, to protest, to produce meaning, and to say something about the world.

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[191] Since the 1975 edition of this book is not available to me at this moment, I used the following edition to correct my German mistakes in this reference and above as indicated: Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, Neuwied, Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1962; which I used only for small corrections.

[192] I read a text by Arendt in a French translation many years ago, and it is probably the same as the one I quote, however, after reflection, I am not totally sure at the moment if it is the same text, as there may be editorial differences, for instance. For that reason, I mention only the pages I read fully for the thesis.

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