

THE REPRESENTATIVITY OF THE HIGH HEEL

A REPRESENTATIVIDADE DO SALTO ALTO

LA REPRESENTATIVIDAD DEL TACÓN ALTO

Renan Martins da Conceição ATTAB¹
Priscila da Silva FERNANDES²

ABSTRACT: This work aims to understand how high heels have been present for so long in the socio-cultural evolutionary process, addressing the consequences that this type of footwear produced, especially in the work environment, demystifying the power of fascination it causes in women and understanding the issue of the male fetish with respect to that object. As a methodology, a research was carried out in which historical facts, blogs and scientific articles were analyzed for theoretical development. As a result, it was found that the use of high heels in daily life can be very harmful to the spine and legs of women and that the use of these shoes is the result of a machoistic culture, based on the fetishism of the male imagination.

KEYWORDS: High heels. Fetish. Power.

RESUMO: *Esse trabalho tem por objetivo compreender como o salto alto esteve presente por tanto tempo no processo evolutivo sociocultural, abordando as consequências que esse tipo de calçado produzia, principalmente no ambiente de trabalho, desmitificando o poder de fascinação que ele provoca nas mulheres e compreender a questão do fetiche masculino com relação a esse objeto. Como metodologia, foi realizada uma pesquisa na qual se analisou fatos históricos, blogs e artigos científicos para o desenvolvimento teórico. Como resultado, obteve-se que o uso do salto alto no cotidiano pode ser muito prejudicial à coluna e às pernas da mulher e que o uso desse calçado é fruto de uma cultura machista, fundamentada no fetichismo do imaginário masculino.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Salto alto. Fetiche. Poder.

RESUMEN: *Este trabajo tiene como objetivo comprender cómo los tacones altos han estado presentes durante tanto tiempo en el proceso evolutivo sociocultural, abordando las consecuencias que produjo este tipo de calzado, especialmente en el ámbito laboral, desmitificando el poder de fascinación que provoca en las mujeres y entendiendo el tema del fetiche masculino con respecto a ese objeto. Como metodología se realizó una investigación en la que se analizaron hechos históricos, blogs y artículos científicos para su desarrollo teórico. Como resultado, se encontró que el uso de tacones altos en la vida diaria puede ser muy dañino*

¹ São Paulo State University (UNESP), Araraquara – SP – Brazil. Master's student in the Postgraduate Program in Sexual Education. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9059-1331>. E-mail: renanattab@unesp.br

² São Paulo State University (UNESP), Araraquara – SP – Brazil. Master's student in the Postgraduate Program in Sex Education. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0717-7816>. E-mail: priscila-silva.fernandes@unesp.br

para la columna y las piernas de las mujeres y que el uso de estos zapatos es el resultado de una cultura machista, basada en el fetichismo de la imaginación masculina.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Tacones altos. Fetiche. Poder.*

Introduction

High heels have been present in the history of mankind since antiquity, beginning with Ancient Egypt, where the use of shoes similar to the platform was exclusive to those who had a higher social status, that is, the nobility. In ancient Greece and Rome, the use of this object was very present among artists who composed the plays. At that time, the heel was produced from a wood or cork, whose artist who had the most prominence used the highest heel (ESTEVÃO, 2018). In the Middle Ages, according to Estevão, (2018), these shoes were used by both men and women, as the objective of this object was to prevent the feet from getting dirty in the mud and excrement due to the lack of basic sanitation; however, butchers also used it to avoid contact with the blood of dead animals, as cited by Estevão (2018). The prostitutes, on the other hand, used it with the intention of seducing men and, consequently, this act brought the high heels closer to the female universe.

In the Renaissance, high heels were used by Persian cavalry to give balance to archers. Royals like Catherine de Médici and King Louis XIV also opted for wearing high heels because of the complexities they presented in relation to their stature. This caused the nobility to adhere en masse to these shoes, which, according to Marreto (2018), in addition to increasing height, showed security and balance. With the Industrial Revolution and the struggle for class equality, the high heel disappeared for a time, returning only in the 1800s, being disseminated throughout America through a model with a smaller jump and that streamlined the movement. In 10th century China, according to Barreiros, (2019), there was a cultural and superstitious tradition of making good marriages through women who had small feet, at most 10 cm; however, for this to happen, women learned, since childhood, the custom of tying their feet so that they do not develop.

Nowadays, there is an illusion in the girls' imagination and also the power that the patriarchal model impregnated in the female illusory that women look beautiful and powerful with high heels, and this idea is cultivated from their early childhood to their adult life, with which women attend parties and the world of work with this empowering, but also torturing, object. The symbolism of this object in the female world is very strong, especially in the heads of men, causing, in many, the fetish in their utopian world, even in the world of work, in which

many companies force their employees to wear high heels, especially those who exercise any position of power or leadership, as they attribute this woman's ability to use this object. The contour that this shoe provides for the female body puts the woman in a position in the male sexual imaginary, often considered by them as a mere object of sexual desires.

This work is based on the qualitative aspects that were analyzed in scientific articles and blogs related to the research theme.

History of high heels

The technology of the 21st century makes the male and female footwear industry present an immense diversity of raw materials used in the manufacture and elaboration of shoes resulting in a diversity of shapes, colors and models, pleasing all types of public. However, it doesn't matter if the model chosen is a sandal with a daring design, a high heel studded with crystals that looks more like a jewel, an insole that looks so soft, it looks like foam, or a male social shoe with an internal shape as soft as a sneaker, as presented by the RBS blog (s/d). These are examples of the challenges that the footwear industry faces to meet current preferences, the number one consumer that is comfort, which is an essential factor that will reshape the design and production of the shoes of the future.

When it comes to women's shoes, especially shoes with heels, women's opinions are quite diverse, as there are those who prefer shoes with low heels (less than 6 cm) and there are those who prefer shoes with medium heels (between 6 and 8.5 cm) and there are also those who prefer shoes with high heels (over 8.5 cm). However, the vast majority of women have or have had, at some point in their life, a high-heeled shoe such as scarpins, which have a sexy, minimalist characteristic, transforming any production. For the field of contemporary fashion, high heels have refrained from the symbolism of the accessory term that complements a whole set of clothing to become a real jewel, often with substantial values and figures as imposing as the figures of real diamonds. Even today, women use high heels as a way to increase height and show refinement; however, there are facts that show that the appearance of this shoe was linked to very different ideas that we are aware of, because, in fact, high heels were initially developed for male feet; however, it is unknown who invented these shoes. There is also another misconception that, according to Mylius (1998, *apud* BRITO, 2013) in his article “An analysis about the hegemony of high-heeled shoes throughout history”, describes that the sabot should not be considered a high-heeled shoe due to its format, a theme that is also found according to

Brito (2013) in the book “Shoes”, written by the author Linda O’Keeffe, who also talks about the wrong considerations of clogs covered by leather being considered high-heeled shoes.

Within this historical context, the high-heeled shoe dates back to 3500 BC in ancient Egypt, reported by Estevão (2018), on the blog “Metrópolis”, in which there are images on murals showing the power of the nobility that used a primitive version from this platform, so as to cause a distinction between social classes, since the commoners were barefoot. According to the same author, in ancient Greece and Rome, the heel originated inside the theater, because while on stage, the actors used platforms with a four-inch base in wood or cork. However, as pointed out by Estevão (2018), the height was proportional to the status of the character represented in dramas and comedies. This same author reports that, around 200 BC, the Romans adopted the idea and called the shoes *kothorni*.

For Estevão (2018), high heels were more than a status symbol. In the Middle Ages (between 1400 and 1600), there was the appearance of a kind of footwear in which the sole was made of stacked wood or cork, becoming the precursor to high heels and receiving the name of *chopines*. According to Marreto (2018), these high-heeled shoes had the function of keeping feet away from mud and other debris from the streets, since, as there was no basic sanitation at that time, there were all forms of dirt and excrement on the streets. Estevão (2018), in the blog “Metrópolis”, describes that, with an eccentric anatomy and a 45 cm heel, this model became fashionable, especially among prostitutes, as it attracted the eyes of the male public. Marreto (2018), on the other hand, describes that butchers used shoes to avoid being close to all that blood on the floor. Thus, for Estevão (2018), it is from that moment that the accessory approached the female universe, and both men and women circulated with the platforms. However, Estevão (2018) describes that they started to shape and differentiate shoes by gender: the pointed and thin versions belonged to the ladies and the thicker models were used by the gentlemen. However, as presented by Marreto (2018), women needed walking sticks or the help of servants to stand. According to the same author, in some countries, women in harems were forced to wear high-heeled shoes, as these made it difficult for them to escape. However, for Marreto (2018), in 1430, *chopines* were banned in Venice, but as no fashion trend can be censored, Venetians became responsible for converting these shoes into extremely luxurious pieces, which symbolized the status, people's wealth and social position.

In 1500, time of the Renaissance, according to Hancock (2018), the heel was the great ally of the Persian knights, since the higher end of the boots helped archers to stay balanced during the process of shooting arrows. The novelty of the heel only spread to the western aristocracy at the end of the 16th century, a time when the Persians sought support in Europe

against the Ottoman Empire. Gradually, thinner heels, also considered more elegant, entered the scene. In France, according to Marreto (2018), in 1530, Catherine de Médici married, at the age of 14, with the Duke of Orleans, the future king of France, however, due to her short stature and a very thin body, these characteristics made the duchess insecure beside the bridegroom, as a solution to her problems, Catherine ordered a pair of shoes that would make her taller, causing a real success with the nobility. With that, according to Gonzaga (s/d), nobles joined the heel en masse which, in addition to raising the height, showed security and balance.

About 200 years later, according to Estevão (2018), the fashion of high heels was launched by King Louis XIV, who had a complex in relation to his short stature (which was 1.60 m) with the only way to become taller, increase the heel of his shoes, thus placing the fashion of high heels as a rule of clothing, because, besides the aesthetic utility, the heel served to distinguish the nobility from the commoners, since only the members who made up the court were allowed to wear heels like his. However, in addition to the fashion of heels, he abused the luxury of wigs. Due to the fixation by high heels, Luís XIV invested in square and ornamented versions with bows and buckles, according to Estevão (2018). His shoes were known *as talon rouge*, because they had the red heel as a trademark (detail: the rest of the shoe could be of another color, but the heels were necessarily red, as this color represented power and nobility). At that time, France, although still dominated by Spain, became a reference in fashion in Europe and the Palace of Versailles was the real fashion catwalk for glamorous noble shows. However, for Gonzaga (s/d), in 17th century Europe, even with the consolidation of high heels through the nobility, both men and women had to be transported in high chairs carried by servants, as they were unable to walk on the stone pavement. This exaltation was only ended with the Industrial Revolution, when the habits of superiority defended by the nobility became inadequate within society due to the movement of equality of social classes, as a result of which there was the disappearance of heels, returning to fashion around 1800, conquering all of America through a wide variety of options. However, the heel had decreased and become more discreet before returning to be very thin and high in the following century, as pointed out by Estevão (2018).

At that same time, in the Middle East, small heels were added to traditional shoes, according to what Barreiros (2019) describes, while in China the tradition determined that the feet (lower limbs) should be between 8 to 10 cm. For this, the girls broke and tied their fingers, wearing small boots (usually of red fabrics, which symbolized the color of luck). Within the tradition of Japan, there were geta slippers, which were structured in wood and had two beams at the bottom. They were intended to balance the proportion of ritual kimonos, according to

Gonzaga (2018). Another important historical fact pointed out by Estevão (2018) was that the men who made up the European elite wore heels in sports related to horses, as these were practices and activities linked to the male universe and the heel symbolized male virility. However, these habits already belonged to the Persian knights.

Between 1730 and 1740, due to behavioral and governmental changes, men stopped wearing high-heeled shoes and these became, exclusively, part female wing, because, at that time, women struggled for differentiation, when they started to use the cigarettes, with a short haircut and in the fight for their rights, they started wearing pieces of men's clothing, including high-heeled shoes. Bossan (2013) and Brito (2013), show that today's footwear is the result of the discovery of the Italian Salvatore Ferragamo, who was born in a small town near Naples in the 18th century. Coming from a simple family, he produced his sister's shoes for the first communion. Taking a liking to practice, he worked making shoes in Naples, then left for the United States to carry out his studies. According to Estevão (2018), in the 19th century, with the emergence of photography, women began to be photographed naked, using only a single accessory: a heeled shoe that was intended to accentuate the curves of the body. It is through this purpose that the erotic connotation around the piece is created, as described by Estevão (2018), in addition to the associative idea of the old prostitutes, who used and made this accessory famous. At the same time, more precisely at the end of the 1950s, the footwear industry started to be valued for the production of hand-made high-heeled shoes, as Marreto (2018) tells us on the website “Área da mulher.r7”. With this, the English designer Charles Worth, considered the “father of haute couture”, gained prominence before the European royalty through the making of shoes.

For Estevão (2018), at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, high-heeled shoes were totally popularized, in addition to becoming a symbol of elegance, due to the great contribution that Hollywood stars made when they paraded with various heels in their feet. In the post-war period, in 1950, designer Christian Dior and designer Roger Vivier (creators of the shoes worn by Queen Elizabeth in her coronation in 1953), developed the needle heel, better known as *stiletto*. However, because it is a shoe composed of such a thin heel, made of metal and similar to a blade, its use has become banned in public buildings in Europe due to damage to the floor. Estevão (2018) describes that the first high-heeled shoe factory appeared in New York in 1888, bringing the French style into the American continent, however, the peak of this object occurred only at the turn of the 20th century when women opted for shorter skirts and with that they started to show their legs, in addition to conquering the freedom of wearing high heels with the intention of enhancing feminine sensuality.

Currently, the shoe style is related to the style of each woman, who may or may not have a taste for high heels. However, the femininity and elegance that this shoe brings to any woman is undeniable. However, as a fashion tip, women who want to get a wild shoe capable of giving, according to Botero (2018), an up in any production, should invest in the good and classic pumps with high heels.

Therefore, culture is the biggest determinant of desires, needs and behaviors that a person learns from childhood with his family and other institutions. And the heel, in this context, can be understood as a cultural phenomenon, the persistence of the use of high-heeled shoes being a cultural phenomenon. (BRITO, 2013, p. 7, our translation).

Much more than leaving the woman elegant, sexy and beautiful, the use of high heels is something cultural and, since very early ages, the girl already learns that that object is the desire of all women because they make them beautiful and powerful.

The symbology of the shoe is very strong within the universe of the male imagination, according to the authors Kaetsu, Lanchi and Pépece (2013). For them, this historical symbology is more important for the commercialization of an object than its own functionality, so the shoe is much more than an object that protects the feet from contact with the floor. Its function is not so simple. It talks a lot about the woman who is wearing it, shows her sensuality, her power, even if she belongs to some group.

Dreams and work

High heels are an object of desire for every girl, who from a very early age imitates her mother, putting on her shoes and walking around the house feeling powerful and sublime, or dreaming of Cinderella's fairy tale, in which the prince seeks his beloved by the crystal shoe that the beautiful lady lost the night before, at the ball, waiting for the prince charming who will take her to her castle and live happily ever after. After adolescence, the little girl discovers that the dream of being a princess no longer exists, however, the idea of power and seduction that exists before this object is perpetuated until her adult life, when the woman is charged (and often required) to wear these high-heeled shoes. At large parties and ceremonies, in addition to impeccable clothing, women should behave on top of a high-heeled shoe that will make them more beautiful, elegant and attractive to male eyes, not being well considered a beautiful and well-dressed woman at a party with a shoe with no heel or with little heel, making women subject themselves to situations of suffering and pain in order to show that they are powerful and elegant. However, this is not something that is limited to just a few hours of days of big

festivities, for some women, the reality of the 15 or 20cm “executioner” is present in their daily professional routine, as several companies require their employees use high heels throughout the work period, especially those who hold some command position, such as management. If you are in front of the television screens or any outstanding professional attitude, there is a demand for the use of this object considered a symbol of power and femininity, because, for our macho culture, the empowered woman who can dictate rules and manifest attitudes of power (the few who get to prominent positions within companies) must be impeccably dressed and mounted on high heels, and the higher the more powerful this woman is considered, needing to endure all forms of pain, therefore, to be respected as the person who will lead an entire team, must wear high-heeled shoes, since for those who are in charge with so many responsibilities and demands, the use of this accessory should be no problem, because what is a shoe in front of so many important tasks that she must develop within the company.

The consumption of high heels at work is endowed with a lot of symbolism. Observing the objectives of the work, it can be concluded that there are several meanings for the use of high heels in professional activities by the women studied, and those related to the female image, the power, and the leadership necessary to perform the work, and also, the respect it represents, in front of peers in the professional environment. High heels are seen as an artifact that attributes the qualities necessary for good performance and personal image vis-à-vis customers, suppliers, managers and co-workers (KAETSU; LACHI; PEPECE, p. 6, our translation).

The pains that women suffer when they need to spend a lot of time on these shoes, especially within the work environment, requiring them to be efficient and competent, staying on top of that object for six or more worked hours, make them more valued by their superiors and are those that make use of the biggest jumps. There are companies that, together with the uniform, required the use of high heels, the so-called dress code, which is the dress code of companies, Cunha, in his blog, reports the speech of the lawyer specialized in the field of work, Werner Keller, who says that within the company's dress code it is mandatory to wear high heels, this will have no problem if there is common sense, but it can also be understood as an act of rejection for some due to the existence of women that cannot use this type of footwear due to health problems; therefore, the company is supported by the law, as there is no prohibition for this requirement, saving those who prove they have health problems that can be aggravated by wearing high heels, such as spine, heel and knee problems, always needing explain yourself for not using such an object, not only for your superiors, but for the other co-workers who cast a questioning look.

High heels can make it difficult for the person to walk, as this limits the contact of the foot with the ground, preventing the complete distribution of the impact absorption, which can cause various problems and even fractures. A large number of women, wearing high heels, develop bunions, spinal problems, varicose veins, and their late afternoons are tortuous with extremely painful feet, swollen, causing several future problems in their lower limbs. In addition to all this, normally, most service environments have stairs, making it even more difficult for women who are using this type of footwear.

One of the criticisms that the feminist movement makes is the subordination of women in relation to the use of high heels, arguing that this is used to please the male fetish imaginary, placing the female image only as an object of man's desire in all environments in which women are present. Another major problem, in addition to suffering, is the difficulty of running with this object, especially in times of trouble such as needing to escape from a possible aggressor or a rapist, with high heels being an exceptional villain in this moment of danger.

However, according to Cunha, in his blog, there is a trend towards the use of flat shoes, and this trend is also occurring in the corporate world, not leaving aside elegance and femininity. On the other hand, a woman who is more comfortable shows more security and confidence. Even in the fashion world, as Fernanda Casagrande reports, on 29 May 2018, on the Purepeople website, the actress Kristen Stewart used *a kitten heels* (thin and low-heeled shoes also known as a kitten) at the Cannes festival, causing an uproar and amazement for the fashion world. On the other hand, Passos describes an Italian researcher who obtained, as a result of research, the benefits of high heels for women who use this object in sexual life due to the strengthening of the pelvic floor, depending on the angle that the feet are in relation to the floor, having less electrical activity of the pelvic muscles, becoming more relaxed and being able to obtain more contraction force.

Fetishism

The high heels, for making the woman's body in evidence due to keeping her back straight, the breasts more forward and the hips more in motion, is a fetish object in the minds of men, leaving them more excited. On the other hand, women can feel more sensual and seductive, as demonstrated by the muse of the cinema Sharon Stone, in the film *Basic Instinct*, in which she appears wearing an elegant and sensual outfit, wearing high-heeled shoes, carrying out her famous leg crossing. However, all of this is the fruit of the macho patriarchy in which we live. We inherit this thought that the woman has to be beautiful and attractive to get the

man's attention, often being treated simply as a mere object of male pleasure, even though some report that they use it because they like it and feel beautiful, but the big question is how the idea of feeling beautiful was presented to her, because since her early childhood, the girl is told that the woman looks beautiful in long dresses and with high heels. This idea is so strongly internalized within the feminine world that even those who claim to be feminists like actress Juliana Paes, described by Pedro Tadeu, in the *Diário de Notícias* on 14 November 2017, as a person who claims to be a feminist and wears high heels to decorate herself because she like it and feel beautiful. According to the same author, the use of high heels by women should be an act free will and not something that she was conformed, taught and often forced to wear.

When we enter the female universe, a common theme among women is related to shoes and among the various models developed and presented by the footwear industry is the darling of the vast majority: the high-heeled shoe. Even in the teenage world, in which the vast majority of girls are adept at sneakers, the use of high heels has started earlier and earlier and has become more and more frequent. According to Foucault (2005), the discourse is a game of writing, reading and exchange, in which only the signs are considered, that is, the discourse goes beyond its condition of signifying becoming a signifier. Thus, for this discourse to occur, it is necessary that there is a context that interferes and that is also interfered by it, as long as there is a “control” originated in systems agreed by society.

This happens because the analysis of the discourse around high heels is something extremely strategic and well elaborated, in which there will be multiple “speeches” that not only enter the world of oral speech, but also the written speech through images, gestures, colors, smells, among others, thus embedding a longing in the teen world for the use of high-heeled shoes. According to Pinto (2002), all communication is part of a social ritual with rules and conventions that must be followed and all contextualization goes through the mediations required in that social environment. The subject of the discourse becomes part of the mediation, that is, he ceases to be the passive agent (sender or receiver) to become the active agent that is involved in all stages of the system. Thus, the receiver receives the message by decoding it with the intention of protecting the speech, and then becomes the sender when answering it.

In this way, the position that the subject will occupy in the structures of communication will be totally independent, since its basis will be in the imaginary built within and by the historical-social context, that is, the words begin the structuring, however the imaginary is what will complement the interpretation of the received message. According to Orlandi (1992), the great contribution of Discourse Analysis is to observe the modes of construction of the imaginary necessary in the production of meanings. For Pinto (2002), the process of production-

circulation-consumption of the meanings of a text goes through two dimensions, the ideological and the power, called “social semiosis”. According to Prachine (2006), in the world of appearances that we enter once we learn to be what we are through the rules and subsidies underlying the speeches we dominate, the ideological oversees the marks or traits formulated by the generation of meanings found on the textual surface or the pre-constructions developed by the inferences and assumptions granted to common sense, which are shared among the subjects of the communicational structure. According to Pinto (2002), these inferences and assumptions generate, directly or indirectly, unequal power relations and those related to social differences between the participants in this process. Power, on the other hand, becomes the second dimension of the social sign, since power relations are always present within the communication processes, either implicitly or explicitly, as Pinto (2002) points out.

However, when we analyze the historical-social context of the evolution of such an accessory, we note that it is no longer a simple ornament of clothing construction and has become the real jewel that beautifies female feet. However, more than that, high heels have become a myth not only because they protect the feet or increase the height of the wearer, but because they carry extremely strong characteristics such as fetish, power, seduction and femininity. Thus, within Discourse Analysis, power represents an analytical and not concrete dimension, being also linked to fetishism, which makes high heels an extremely powerful speech instrument, supported by the perception of the stimulus.

The word fetish within the historical-social discourse had its form applied in different contexts. In antiquity, the fetish was related to some treaties as a way of denouncing “barbaric” religions, that is, it conceptualized the worship of “clay and wood idols”. However, as time went by, the word fetish came to be used as a form of irrational worship, which led to the emergence of a second understanding, the Marxist one, which translated the expression “product fetishism” as a false awareness and alienation. For Marx, people grant secret values to products, which become a “social hieroglyph” to be decoded (STELLE, 1997). The sexual pathology called fetishism appeared, for the first time, in Krafft-Ebing's book *Psychopathia Sexualis*, having its first edition launched in 1886 in which case studies of patients with paraphilia are shown. The terms "masochism" and "sodomasochism" were coined by Krafft-Ebing; Yet; the language worked on by him is totally poetic, but the treatments used at that time, today would be frowned upon, wicked and sick. Within his work, fetishism is given as a cerebral neurosis, being explained as follows:

(...) invests with voluptuous sensations the imaginary representation of isolated parts of the body or pieces of clothing of the opposite sex, or even simple pieces of cloth. (...) In general, when the fetish is absent, coitus becomes impossible or can only be performed under the influence of the respective imaginary representation, and even so, it may not bring satisfaction (KRAFFT-EBBING, 2000, p. 8, our translation)

The Krafft-Ebing analyzes were carried out at the end of the 19th century, when sexuality was totally unquestionable, making his moral judgment clear in his texts. He believed that abstinence from desire, the eradication of paraphilic behavior or even hydrotherapy (bathing with strings in bathtubs) and faradization (the initial form of electroshock) were the cure for sexual psychopathies, including fetishism (SELLERS, 2000). Only in 1887, Alfred Binet introduced, for the first time, the term “fetishism” with psychological conception and meaning through the essay *Le Fetichisme Dans L'amour*, in which he made it clear that the fetishist obsession was linked to inanimate objects, and that these were the cause of sexual desire and pleasure, except for the cases called "fetishist in love" (*fétichiste en amour*), that is, the obsession with parts of the body which did not transmit sexual desire. According to Binet (1888, our translation): “affirms that we are all more or less; and that there is a constant dose of fetishism in the most common love”. However, fetishism has an extremely important factor and it shows that paraphilia is prominently male:

After studying erotic fantasies and sexual behavior for many years, psychiatrist Robert Stoller concluded that "*fetishizing is the norm for men, not women*". This is not to say that women are not interested in body parts or sensual clothing. But they do not seem to “crave them” the way men do. (This is an important question if we want to explore the appeal *to women* of clothes that men treat as fetishes) (STEELE, 1997, p. 20, our translation).

Freud, in his work entitled "*Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*", from 1905, and in the article "*Fetishism*", from 1927, explains this concept as follows:

(...) the fetish, in fact, is a substitute for the penis. (...) it is a penis that in normal cases should have been abandoned during development, but that the fetish has the function of preserving. (...) the fetish is a substitute for the woman's (mother's) penis that the little boy once believed in and which - we know why - does not in any way want to abdicate (FREUD, 2007, p. 162, our translation)

Freud makes reference to castration and the fear that castration causes in the boy. When the boy realizes that his mother has no penis, he feels that the penis itself is in danger; then, he gets a substitute for the mother's “lost” phallus (FREUD, 2007). In this case, the phallus is something symbolic. Lacan, a Freudian psychoanalyst and an important celebrity in the line of

thought called Structuralism, describes the fetish object in his *The Seminar*, book 4, when he talks about the object relation. For Lacan, the fetish is close to the symbolic, which is why several authors agree that fetishism is at the limit between neurosis and perversion. Still according to Lacan, this statement occurs through the “Scheme of the Veil”, whose importance lies in being able to correctly situate the elements that come into play in the establishment of the fetish relationship. This scheme shows that “with the presence of the curtain, what is beyond, as a lack, tends to be realized as image. On the veil, the absence is painted” (LACAN, 1995, p. 157, our translation). So, the object takes the place of this absence, in this way, as the fetish is linked to the symbolic, and fantasy to the imaginary, fashion takes possession of it to thus represent desire, lust and glamor.

So, in advertising, desire becomes responsible for the impulse to buy. The exchange of objects carried out by individuals in society is what mediates all human relationships (KEHL, 2004 *apud* RAMOS, 2006), and these objects are full of meanings, “culturally and socially appropriate and favorable” (RAMOS, 2006, p. 29, our translation). Therefore, the desire is not in the object to be purchased, but in the need (be it social or personal) to be met (VESTERGAARD; SCHRODER, 2004 *apud* RAMOS, 2006), and which will never be met. It is in this space that advertising acts by providing us with objects that are promises of success and guaranteed satisfaction (RAMOS, 2004). The objects to be desired are launched by the media (RAMOS, 2004). Guy Debord (1931-1994), in *La société du spectacle*, states that women's magazines show the most favorable style for the market, the fashionable places (DEBORD, 2004), thus forcing people to adapt to what market offers them, since the industry cannot satisfy every individual that makes up society. So, everything has to be fitted into the predetermined model, the image closest to that which is personal and individual to the subject, distancing oneself from what she really is and approaching what was created by the other (RAMOS, 2004). According to the Chilean sociologist and university professor Moulian (1999 *apud* BUSATO, 2001, p. 164, our translation) “this transformation not only fulfills a need of the system, but also of the individual, and that objects contribute to the realization of the possibilities of the self”.

Final considerations

Through this research on the history and the use of high heels, carried out through historical facts, blogs and scientific article, we obtained as a result a long and rich history around this object that many believe is only used to protect the feet and height increase, but, much more

than that, there is a whole context of power, seduction, femininity and fetish, which relates it to whoever has it (BARREIROS, 2019). In antiquity, it distinguished the nobles from the commoners, even today this object remains a reason for distinguishing people. At parties, the woman considered the most beautiful, in addition to her beautiful dress, the heel she wears says a lot about the power she wields, also referred to in the work environment, where the woman who exercises leadership and power is the one who has the biggest heel. As a positive point we can mention the strengthening of the pelvic floor by the use of these shoes, since the lack of total contact of the foot with the ground favors a relaxation of the pelvic muscles, improving their contraction at the moment of sexual intercourse.

In this work, we were able to conclude that there are accessories that say a lot about the people who are wearing them (in this case, high heels); it has been present since the remote history of mankind and is present up to the present day, going through all the transformations that the human species has undergone, since its use by men, reaching even women. In order to prevent their feet from touching the dirt on the street, many women, at that time, used their shoes with extremely high heels, over 30 cm, causing a great difficulty for their walk, even reaching the point of needing to be carried by servants, which represented the power of this object as the highlight of a social class. This object, after a while, disappeared from men's clothing becoming exclusive to the female universe, used in environments of large parties and celebrations, in which the most prominent woman was the one who was well dressed, also with a beautiful high heel that made her more beautiful and empowered, even though she felt great discomfort. This situation was passed beyond festive environments, it was also adopted for the work environment, especially when the woman holds a prominent position. This object is so powerful that it ended up entering the male imagination, leading men to great desires for women who wear it, due to the contour that this shoe gives to the woman's body.

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