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**NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN
DEPARTMENT OF FASHION AND TEXTILES**

EMBROIDERED TEXTILES

**A Social and Cultural Examination of the Shoe
Past and Present**

BY

AISLING O'DOHERTY

**Submitted to the Faculty of Art and Complementary Studies in
Candidacy for the Degree of B.Des. Embroidered Textiles 1998**

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

RESEARCH REPORT

THE EFFECT OF TEMPERATURE ON THE
RATE OF REACTION

BY

J. H. GOLDSTEIN

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank my thesis tutor Hilary O'Kelly for her continued help, encouragement and lively debate.

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Thanks are also due to Sheila Paine, embroiderer, author and traveller for allowing me to photograph the Lotus shoe from her private embroidered clothes collection.

Act no. 123456789

I would like to see the opportunity to sincerely thank my friends and family for their support and help, encouragement and love.

Best,

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Thank you to all who have helped me in my journey. I am grateful for the love and support of my friends and family. I am grateful for the love and support of my friends and family.

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Introduction

In this thesis I have studied shoes, their long, fascinating history and their entangled relationship with humankind.

Personally, I have never been enamoured with shoes or fond of wearing them. As a child I was renowned for my permanently mucky bare feet. These uncomfortable, restrictive nuisances were kicked off at any given opportunity.

It was this dislike, lack of respect and understanding that made the prospect of studying them so enticing, exciting and intriguing. I was anxious to find out if my opinion of this loathsome, cumbersome burden could be changed. Could I be enlightened to their mysteries or enchanted by their spell or would I despise these irritating objects even more when I had finished examining and dissecting them?

One thing I was sure of was that by taking a deceptively simple, functional, everyday object a wondrous wealth and profusion of information could be ascertained from it, not only about our ancestors and the societies and the cultures they inhabited but about our own society and culture. Where certain beliefs and traditions originate from and why, how we have changed and developed and how in other respects we have remained intrinsically the same. This examination and evaluation of collected information is my real passion. Playing detective with just one object and achieving a chain reaction of information that can lead from gender

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roles and sexuality, to economics, war, power and politics to superstition, fears, traditions and fantasies that all reveal different aspects of our society, psyche and personality.

At first I was overwhelmed by the amount of secondary material. There was available not only a vast stockpile of books and articles written on shoes but it was being constantly updated and added to. However, although each one had its own unique, personal viewpoint the information tended to be repeated. So I found it necessary to examine the shoes from different points of view, including feminism, fashion, fetishism, social and cultural studies. But most importantly, I took to the streets of Dublin to find out what was really available and what was really being worn by both men and women. This has possibly had the most profound and lasting effect on how I now regard footwear.

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Chapter 1

In order to discuss shoes and their historical, social and cultural significance it is essential to first understand the nature of object based research.

That every object " ... which fill people's lives. The furnishing, utensils, adornments, decorations, graphic materials, vessels, mechanised products and clothing give form and meaning to the cultures within which they reside." (Breward, 1996, p.xi). Nothing is merely a functional, inanimate object. For example, the fact that shoes are incorporated in every part of our society and our daily lives means that they themselves have gained a variety of different meanings in many areas from gender, age, race, status, wealth and taste.

Both Elizabeth Wilson in Chic Thrills and Ruth Barns and Joanne B. Eicher in Dress and Gender give one of the clearest and straight forward examples of just how much meaning is transferred onto dress. In western society " ... almost the first thing that happens to a new-born baby is that it is colour-coded and thus gendered ... blue for a boy, pink for a girl" (Ash/Wilson, 1992, p.14). However it is not always that simple, what makes the study of dress so interesting is that it is full of complexity and ambivalence.

If you take an obvious example, like the stiletto and the Doctor Marten boot, at first the stiletto suggests, in fact almost screams, femininity and the Doctor Marten boot, hard wearing masculinity, there appears to be no subtlety in this example, simply a juxtaposition of cultural stereotypes. However, if you then elaborate on the context of how these shoes are worn e.g. by a man, or a woman, the old or the young, in the street or at home. Examine the year and period and also take account of the physical qualities e.g. the form, texture and embellishment and the condition, clean, dirty, new, old, these two shoes can suddenly convey or be interpreted in a whole array of different ways and meanings. Each person's interpretation differs depending on their own taste, personal experience of context and object.

Dress can be seen as a means of communication, an unspoken language. What language you speak and how literate you are depends on how successful you are in controlling and understanding it.

Many people use the language of dress unwittingly, while others manipulate it to convey a specific message or image of themselves.

This is the other element of studying dress that makes it so fascinating and complex. It not only "embodies culture" (Ash/Silson, 1992, p.14) but "personal identity and values" (Breward, 1995, 1995, p.1). It can be used to conceal or highlight parts of the body, to falsify or reveal a person's identity and psyche, to include and exclude an individual from parts of society. So when studying and

analysing dress it is important to remember its perplexity and enigmatic nature, to take " ... account of multiple meanings and interpretations ... explanations which are multilayered and open ended" (Breward, 1995, p.4), there are few definates, just observations and ideas.

So now that we have established that "dress is a powerful means of communication" (Barns/Eicher, 1992, p.8), we can apply this to the study of shoes.

Shoes are particularly intriguing as despite their deceivingly diminutive size and seemingly utilitarian purpose "there is something about the nature of the shoe - its compactness, its solidness which hints not only at the individual" but also contains a profusion of information about the "nature of the society" it inhabits (If the shoe Fits, Observer Life, Dec. 1996, p.18). Shoes have come to assume "particular importance for the human race" (Boccardi, 1993, p.9).

When you consider that "the average person walks 2,000 miles a year" (O'Keeffe, 1996, p.248), it is hardly surprising that this apparently small, simple and basic object has an incredibly vital role, protecting one of the most important parts of our body, our feet. which allow us to stand, walk, run, climb, jump, survive and function. So as Luciana Boccardi points out in "Party Shoes" it is "understandable" that shoes became "a precious" object and a "defence against threats to survival" (Boccardi, 1993, p.9).

Therefore shoes have always been around, the first known images of footwear "were found in a 15,000 year old cave painting in Spain"

(O'Keeffe, 1996, p.321). Because of this long history and essential functional role of protection, shoes have become an integral part of society, absorbing our culture and history, thus becoming part of our psyche, our superstitions and folklore traditions.

There are numerous examples of shoes in superstition and tradition but they are particularly endemic in wedding ceremonies. Possibly the best known tradition is the tying of shoes to the bride and groom's transport or throwing an old shoe after the couple to wish them luck. Others include the father giving his "daughter's shoes to the groom to symbolise that her well-being is now his responsibility" (McDowell, 1989, p.61) or in Finland "The bride's mother will not allow the new husband to go to bed until he has given her a pair of shoes (McDowell, 1989, p.61). Or possibly the most entertaining is the tradition of the groom tapping his "bride lightly on the head with her shoe" to symbolise that he is now "the master" (McDowell, 1989, p.61). In all these examples the shoe becomes a symbol of seisin and transition, as the daughter become a wife and the "property" and "responsibility" of the husband, they also reflect a wish for security, protection and strength. All the functions the shoe fulfils not only physically but also reflects symbolically.

Although many of these traditions have died out, the shoe still occurs as a symbol of luck. As charms or amulets at important junctures in people's lives, such as birthdays, christenings, weddings and anniversaries. New shoes are often stepped on for good luck or inversely it seen as "bad luck to put new shoes on a table" (McDowell, 1989, p.60).

Shoes are also a recurring element in folklore and fairytales, where they commonly play a vital role at the crux of the action.

Who could forget Dorothy's wonderful bejewelled ruby slippers in "The Wizard of Oz". Fig 1/2. When one of the eight pairs of shoes, made for the film, was auctioned in 1988, it sold for \$165,000 emphasising their significant influence and their status as a valued cultural icon.

There are numerous other stories, like the enchanting tale of "The Elves and the Shoemaker", the magical shoe in the "Seven League Boots" and "Puss in Boots" and the tragic yet bewitching tale of "The Red Shoes".

There are a multitude of examples, but perhaps the most memorable and beloved is the story of Cinderella, which is full of the "promise of romance and excitement" making little girls believe "the Cinderella myth that shoes can magically transform their lives" (O'Keeffe, 1996, p.12).

It is slightly bewildering when you discover that the first known version of this tale was written down in China in 850-860 A.D. Marina Warner puts it perfectly when she describes it as a "dizzy feeling" to discover that the "essential structure of the Cinderella story has been told for over a thousand years" (Warner, 1994, p.202-203). In this tale Cinderella's foot and shoes are used as a metaphor to represent and emulate traditional characteristics seen and feminine and desirable. Frail, delicate and dainty, the physical

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perfection of her foot proves her worth and is seen to personify her purity of soul and character. Fig 3.

Of course this narrative of gender roles, social, cultural and economic status does not only take place in fairytales. that is why "Even when garments are used for a specific and apparently mundane purpose, we may find that the form they take is not always purely dictated by rationally appropriate requirements" (Barnes/Eicher, 1992, p.5). This becomes particularly palpable when you consider that there are in "non-specialist terms" there are only "eight basic footwear types from which all men's and women's styles are created" (McDowell, 1989, p.100). Fig 4. The Oxford, the Derby, the Brogue, the Pump, the d'Orsay, the Boot, the Moccasin and the Sandal. Although sometimes unrecognisable as originating from any of the above, all shoes are a variation of these eight.

One of the best examples of shoes being modified and fashioned to reflect class and gender first appeared in the twelfth century and continued to the fifteenth century, it was known as the poulaine or crakowe. Fig 5. The modification was quite simple but extremely effective, the toe of the shoe was exaggerated and extended into a long narrow point. The style was exclusively worn by men and its form appears to have been intentionally phallic, therefore aiding and promoting a "heightened sense of differentiation" (Bernard, 1995, p.8) between the sexes. As in the modern day visual play and interpretation by Vivienne Westwood in Fig 6 highlights.

Furthermore, the extravagant consumption of material, the awkward construction and obviously impractical shape of the shoe were all to

demonstrate the wearer's social and economic position. Firstly, that they could afford the cost to pay for the material and labour to produce the shoe and secondly, that they could afford leisure time and did not need to partake in menial tasks. As a guide book on "the politics of personal appearance", "Roman de la Rosa" makes clear. "Above all be attractive, shoe conterie! Dress well and buy good footwear - Wear fresh, new shoes quite frequently, so closely fitting that lower-class people will wonder how you got into them and how you will take them off" (Breward 1995, p.21). By wearing poulaines 'gentlemen' highlighted their wealth and refinement, their superior position, thereby setting them apart and "above" the majority.

However, fashions intended "to gratify a royal need for exclusivity" are "nearly always taken up by the aristocracy and then copied by the middle classes" (McDowell, 1989, p.58). In a society that is dictated by wealth and power, wearing clothing that projects these attributes automatically influences how a person is treated and regarded. Of course, as soon as something becomes fashionable and highly regarded the majority will attempt to wear it in order to gain social acceptance and respect. Between the nobility's "need of exclusivity" (McDowell, 1989, p.58) and the Church finding the new fashionable style utterly vulgar, vain and overtly sexual, which were all the reasons it was such a success, the Sumptuary Laws were introduced. These were an attempt at social control, to dictate "the details of apparel which each class might wear" so as "magnificence could be reserved for royalty" (McDowell, 1989, p.59).

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quality to abandon the style" (McDowell, 1989, p.59). Edward IV of England was just as severe in his condemnation of the fearsome shoe and "informed shoemakers that if they made them for 'unprivileged' persons any boot or shoe with toes exceeding two inches in length they would forfeit twenty shillings" and that "no knight under the state of Lord ... shall use or wear ... any shoe or boot having spikes passing the length of two inches" (McDowell, 1989, p.59).

This was not the first time laws were introduced in an attempt to control peoples; appearance even "In ancient Rome ... the Emperor Aurelius forbade men to wear coloured shoes and Heliogabalus would not allow women to ornament their shoes with gold or precious stones" (McDowell, 1989, p.59).

This is because dress not only distinguishes people of status, class and gender but when it is not controlled and restricted by those in authority it is seen as a serious threat to their social order, values dominance and exclusivity. The Sumptuary Laws illustrate beautifully just how much power can be contained in a simple shoe.

However, it is not always the clothing that causes the difficulties as any period of social and cultural change and upheaval not only affects but is reflected in the clothing of the time. In order to illustrate this I shall take one of the most exciting periods in European history as an example, the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th. This was an era full of dramatic and turbulent events that had a lasting effect on European society. It was a revolutionary time, not only politically, but also

technologically, scientifically and intellectually. It is interesting to see how these events affected and were reflected in the fashions of the time.

The most significant event at the turn of the 18th to the 19th century was the fall of the monarchy in France and the rise of Napoleon to power. The effect that the French Revolution had on fashion and footwear throughout Europe was immense. Clothing became simpler, unnecessary finery was reduced to a minimum which was clearly in keeping with the more democratic ideal of the French Revolution - those of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. However, although the styles had become simpler and more universal, the social and class distinctions were still made clear, but more subtly, through high quality materials, tailoring and immaculate presentation. Another important influence on men's clothing in particular was the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. The grit and grime of city living and the accelerated pace of the business world meant that cloths had to be slightly more practical but still reflect power, strength and gain instant respect and so men's clothes and shoes gradually became more sensible and the gaiety of the 18th century slowly began to disappear, Fig 7/8. In contrast aristocratic women's footwear became more fragile and impractical which is a clear indication of their role in the business world. This shall be looked at in greater detail throughout this chapter.

Being properly dressed in the 19th century was extremely important for both men and women. It was considered (as it is today, although more commonly challenged) to reflect your personality, social standing, credibility and whether or not you were to be treated with

courtesy, respect and as a person of power and importance. As Lord Chesterfield is quoted as saying "dress is a very foolish thing; and yet it is a very foolish thing for a man not to be well dressed, according to his rank and way of life". (Bell, 1992 (1947) p.18). This is the key to understanding men's cloths and shoes in the 19th century. It is all about reflecting power and strength in this strict patriarchal society.

This was a period in which men were expected to be strong, sombre, restrained and self-assured. All clothing had an air of stiff formality, a snug fit, smooth dramatic line and expert tailoring, all adding to the image of the "modern" business man. The smart, solemn, authoritative gent about town. Therefore, it is not surprising that the boot and the plain, flat pump became the standard styles of the time. It was also a time of dandysim, influenced by George Bryan Brummell, "Beau Brummell" and Count D'Orsay, the fashion leaders of the day. A time when men took an intense interest and pride in their appearance. "Boot and shoe styles proliferated. Many were named after personalities" (McDowell, 1989, p.35). Such as the Wellington and Balmoral boot and the d'Orsay pump. Fig 9.

However, when you compare these relatively plain and simple shoes to the wonderfully capricious shoes of the 17th century, with their "extravagant roses of ribbons" Fig 10 (McDowell, 1989, p.116) or "think of 17th century fops with their heavy wigs, tight corsets, thick make-up and red high heels teetering around Versailles and St. James's like early Lily Savages" (Simply to Die For, Sunday Times, Aug. 1997, p.5), it begins to become apparent how much men's apparel has changed. When it is taken into account that up

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes the need for transparency and accountability in financial reporting.

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3. The third part of the document presents the findings of the study. It shows that there is a significant correlation between the variables being studied, which supports the hypothesis that was tested.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the implications of the findings for future research and practice. It suggests that the results of this study could be used to inform policy decisions and to guide the development of new programs and initiatives.

5. The fifth part of the document provides a conclusion and a summary of the key points. It reiterates the importance of the study and the need for further research in this area.

until "the seventeenth century, footwear had been virtually identical for both sexes" and was in fact women's shoes which hidden under long skirts "were less extravagantly decorated" (McDowell, 1989, p.31), the effects of industrialisation and war become startlingly apparent. The fashionable, macho, hard wearing, practical shoe styles "brought into the domestic scene overtones of hard riding, mighty battles and close male companionship" (McDowell, 1989, p.32). Fig 11.

When you compare these sturdy, functional, "masculine" styles to the shoes of their female counterparts you get a very distinct yet contrasting picture of women's role in 19th century society.

European women's apparel was also visibly influenced by the French Revolution. Ancient Greece was known for its philosophical society and democratic ideals. These qualities were very much admired during the French Revolution. Therefore women's clothes became based on all things classically Greek. Fig 12.

Like men's fashions, women's clothes had been simplified, the emphasise being on style and elegance. Fig 13. This was an immense change from the incredible lavishness of the mid 18th century style. Fig 14. However this concept was the only similarity between men and women's clothing and shoes.

Well-to-do women's shoes were mainly simple. flat, slippers. Finely decorated with ruffles, lace, ribbons, embroidery and tapestry. This embellishment was executed with great restraint and refinement. Fig 15.

These fine, delicate shoes really sum up how women were perceived at the beginning of the 19th century. They were expected to emulate all things feminine and like their shoes be pure, frail, dainty and delicate. But most importantly, passive. "Upper-class women were literally kept in their place with perishable footwear" (O'Keeffe, 1996, p. 295).

These shoes were not meant for acting, doing or taking any aggressive action. The society of the time was firmly based around the ideologies that Aristotle had articulated back in the fourth century BC, a very "democratic" Greek. "Man is active, full of movement, creative in politics, business and culture. The male shapes and moulds society and the world. Women, on the other hand, is passive. She stays at home, as is her nature. She is matter waiting to be formed by the active male principle. Of course the active elements are always higher on any scale, and more divine." (Miles, 1988, p.68).

So these shoes were designed for the docile, domestic woman, as it was believed that womankind was created "for the indoors functions, the man for all others" (Miles, 1988, p.68). Society expected women of taste and class to be ladylike and that meant being docile, passive, devoted, faithful, dependent and loving daughters, wives and mothers, content with running the household and obtaining a certain level of accomplishment at music or needlework.

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Although we may wonder why they wore these impractical and restrictive "paper thin slippers of brocade, their soles too fragile to withstand even a few steps outdoors" it is essential to remember that "their maids toiled in sturdy black leather boots" (O'Keeffe, 1996, p.14). That women were not passive, inactive, docile creatures but that "the million million women who were born, worked and died after lives not far above those of their cattle" (Miles, 1988, p.154). In the 17th century, the Duchess of Newcastle gave a "savage attack" on the conditions of the female labourers". She described women that lived "like bats or owls, labour like beasts and die like worms" (Miles, 1988, p.192).

So it is imperative to remember, just like the poulaine or crakowe, the fact that the shoe was impractical, inept, inadequate and more of a hindrance than a help only enhances and excentuates the wearer's social and economic position and that these women were among the fortunate and privileged few. It is also important to take into account when looking at women's clothes at the beginning of the 19th century and their idealised domestic role in society, that "historical period of great progress for men have often involved losses and setbacks for women" such as the "Athenian culture, the Renaissance, and the French Revolution, in all of which women suffered severe reversals" (Miles, 1988, p.13).

In both the French Revolution and World War II women played fundamental, vital and active roles and obtained greater freedom and authority in order to help the "cause". However, when it was over they were encouraged or pushed out of the public sphere and back into the domestic. As "attacks on prominent public women"

after the French Revolution "revealed the fears of the revolutionaries that if allowed to enter the public realm they would become not women but hideous perversions of female sexuality" (Chadwick, 1990, p.163).

I believe this conservative backlash after devastating wars or revolutions is an attempt by society or the "dominant culture" (Ash./Wilson, 1992, p.16) to regain social order, control and a semblance of "normality" after such a terrifying period of upheaval and uncertainty. Also, in simplistic terms, it can be seen as an endeavour, after great losses of human life and the destruction of many families, to re-establish a strong population, with a secure, structured, domestic environment.

So by researching and examining, comparing and contrasting men and women's shoes of this period, it is possible to discover and obtain an inconceivable amount of information about the changing culture and society. Thereby clearly illustrating just how shoes are intertwined and entangled with humanity and inextricably and irrevocably linked to our universe.

This has been further illustrated this throughout this chapter by giving a range of clear and specific examples, where shoes have been amalgamated into our traditions, superstitions, folklore and fairytales; our history, society, culture and psyche and that it is because they are a seemingly small, simple, mundane and everyday object, that have been with us throughout our history and development, that they have soaked up everything we have to offer

and when studied can impart an insurmountable amount of information back to us.

Chapter 2

The origin and development of the heel, why it evolved, is disputed and questioned however like most clothing it appears to have materialised out of an essential and fundamental need, to raise oneself out of the dirt and muck. For example "Egyptian butchers wore heels to raise their feet above the carnage" (O'Keeffe, 1996, p.74) and although debated there is a theory that the heel evolved for men because they needed it to keep their foot in the stirrup" (McDowell, 1989, p.30) when horse riding.

However, like all the objects that fill our lives that are presumed to be purely functional and insignificant the heel quickly came to signify so much more. Our "value system" sexuality, culture, our "conceits and fantasies" (McDowell, 1989, p.475) were "inevitably embodied" (Ash/Wilson, 1992, p.14) in this simple yet ingenuous addition.

I believe that heels, even in their earliest and clumsiest forms, have prevailed and frequently flourished because of its effective and dramatic visual impact. By literally lifting "the wearer to goddess" or god "status" and creating "a distance from reality that ignites forbidden fantasies" (O'Keeffe, 1996, p.418).

Lola Pagola in Linda O'Keeffe's Shoes articulates the psychology behind high heels beautifully "Goddesses live in the heavens. They do not stand, they do not walk, they glide and sway. The goddesses are laughing and balance on heels as slender as the tip of a little finger" (O'Keeffe, 1996, p.424). Again it is "because of their assumed impracticality that they "can mark the wearer out as someone different, someone special" (A Show with a View", Vogue. U.K., July 1994, p.130) Just like the fine slippers at the beginning of the 19th century or the poulaine of the middle ages. Heels with this additional component of physically elevating and completely altering the way an individual walks and stands can have a profound effect on their behaviour and attitude, and therefore, logically have a discernible affect on society. It is because of their powerful influence and impression that they have provoked such a strong anomaly of reactions and that their moral and social implication have been hotly debated over the centuries.

One of the most controversial "high heeled" shoes were the Italian Chopines from the 16th century. Although a variation of earlier styles found in Spain, the Orient and Turkey, the Chopin was literally taken to new heights in Venice. Usually made of cork or wood and decorated, jewelled and upholstered these are platforms in their most obtuse and direct form. In one Venetian collection there is a pair 20 inches high. Fig 16.

Of course, these were inordinately awkward and immensely difficult to walk in and the wearer normally needed the assistance of a servant just to get around. However, yet again "immobility was

indicative of a aristocratic standard - the less a woman walked, the higher her social prominence" (Trasko, 1989, p.14). Fig 17.

Although, even at the time this ludicrously ostentatious style was mocked and criticised. A visitor to Venice in the 17th century described the women as being "made of three things, one part wood, meaning the chopines, another part was their apparel and the third part was a woman" (O'Keeffe, 1996, p.357). Some noblemen were reputed to have disapproved of the style as it "allowed ladies to tower over them" (Trasko, 1989, p.15) while others believed that they "introduced" the "heavy wooden chopines to prevent their wives from straying (O'Keeffe, 1996, p.354). Either way the church definitely and ironically approved of this vain, frivolous and self-indulgent style "because it was thought if women couldn't move around freely, dancing and so on, there would be fewer possibilities for sin" (Trasko, 1989, p.15). Which makes the fact that the style was taken up by the Venetian courtesan even more ironic. Fig 18.

This is one of the first examples where the ambiguity and perplexity of the heel, which fascinates me, first becomes apparent. They can either make a person appear defenceless, vulnerable and submissive by inhibiting their freedom and restricting their movement. Or they can make a person distinguished, authoritative and dominant by setting them above and apart by literally placing them on a pedestal. This strange paradox shall be discussed throughout this chapter.

The heel as we know it today developed from the chopine when it "became apparent that by lowering the sole at the front" both the

problem of "severely limited mobility" and the "somewhat comical way of walking ... could be solved". The heel "was an immediate success and, with only the briefest of eclipses, has remained in fashion ever since" (McDowell, 1989, p.30).

Soon these new heeled shoes were as popular with men as they were with women and yet again they were used to symbolise power and wealth as the fact that red heels in the 17th and 18th centuries "were worn only by the privileged classes" clearly illustrates (O'Keeffe, 1996, p.79). Fig 19. Predictably with the aristocracy's thirst for exclusivity the temptation to push the style to its extremes could not be resisted. Both Louis XIV, the Sun King and numerous "European women tottered on heels 5 inches and higher" (O'Keeffe, 1996, p.74). Again some people found this vanity and self-importance egotistical and foolish as a short verse from the 18th century lays testament to;

"Mount on French heels when you go to a ball,
it is now the fashion to totter and fall"

(Trasko, 1989, p.12) Fig 20.

However, one of the nicest trends and developments, which is still utilised with great effect today, was the addition of decoration and embellishment to the heel, as there is obviously "so much space between a ... heel and the floor that one can use" (O'Keeffe, 1996, p.109). These shoes for obvious reasons became known as "venez-y-vous" or "come hither" shoes. This was not merely a female prerogative. "At the Court of Louis XIV, men wore shoes whose heels were painted with miniature rustic or romantic scenes"

(O'Keeffe, 1996, p.111) which must have been a tremendous amount of fun. Fig 21.

But undoubtedly, the most essential and important result in lowering the front of the shoe and creating the high heel, was how it provocatively and dramatically alters the whole posture and psychology of the person wearing it. This is the central and ultimate reason for the high heel's continued and unparalleled success throughout the centuries.

It is because high heels shift the centre of gravity forward that the "lower back arches ... the spine and legs seem to lengthen ... the chest thrusts forward ... calves and ankles appear shapelier and ... arches seem to heave out" of the shoes. (O'Keeffe, 1996, p.73). This makes "the foot look smaller ... accentuates voluptuousness in the shape and movement of the lower limbs" (Rossi, 1977, p.121), which (becomes with a bit of practise) more sensuous. Fig 22. Or as contemporary shoe designer Christian Louboutin eloquently puts it; "If you wear high heels, the breast is coming out there ... and the arse is coming, coming out here" (*My Sole Mate* Sunday Times, Sep.1997, p.6).

It is also believed that the lengthening of the leg and pointing of the toe, which mimics a physical reflex which occurs during sexual arousal, when the "whole foot may be extended until it falls in line with the rest of the lower leg" (Rossi, 1977, p.122) is part of the high heels attraction and success. Fig 23. Correlations have been drawn between this and the "erect ankle and extended leg" which is a biological sign of sexual availability in several animal species" and

that heels force the leg into what anthropologists call a "courtship strut" (O'Keeffe, 1996, p.442).

I have to admit that I feel that this may be reading a little too much into the reason for the heel's prosperity, but there is not denying that high heels are extremely sexual. By flattering the shape of the leg and the foot and enhancing the undulation of the waggle and sway of each step.

The foot and shoe have always been intensely sexually charged. So much so that the British Parliament decreed in the 17th century that "Any woman who through the use of high heel shoes or other devices, leads a subject of Her Majesty into marriage, shall be punished with the penalties of Witchery" (Trasko, 1989, p.65). Yet again the fearsome and dangerous shoe was not only corrupting but bewitching a nation. Michelangelo Biondo, in the 16th century, was so upset and torn by desire that he declared "It would have been much better if women had been created without feet, or even without legs at all, so that we would not have been so often excited by spasms of Lust, to our detriment and their satisfaction" (Boccardi, 1993, p8).

Freud in a rather simplistic, male orientated remark which exemplifies the patriarchal attitudes of the time put feet becoming sexual in practice and imagery down to the "inquisitive boy" who "peered at the woman's genitals from below" (Warner, 1994, p.113). It is true that by drawing attention to the foot, you also draw attention to the ankle, leg, in fact the whole body onward and upwards. But I feel that the role of the foot and shoe in sexual

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2. The second part of the document focuses on the implementation of the proposed changes. It details the steps involved in the transition process, from the initial planning phase to the final execution. This section also addresses the potential challenges and risks associated with the changes, providing strategies to mitigate them.

3. The third part of the document discusses the impact of the changes on the organization's overall performance. It highlights the positive outcomes achieved, such as increased efficiency and cost savings. This section also acknowledges the areas where further improvement is needed and provides recommendations for future actions.

4. The fourth part of the document provides a summary of the key findings and conclusions. It reiterates the importance of the changes and the commitment of the organization to continuous improvement. This section also includes a list of references and a glossary of terms used throughout the document.

practice and imagery stems more from the foot's acute sensitivity, which is essential to its role and function, which is to keep us mobile. In order to achieve this it must feel and touch and relay information back to the rest of the body. The foot is covered in "specific pressure points" which 'connect' with specific organs, glands or areas of the body" (Rossi, 1977, p.247-248). This has been utilised and studied in Acupuncture and Reflexology. Fig 24.

It must also be taken into consideration that "until the 20th century" and "Before the thirties" that the foot was a "symbol of chastity, a private part to be hidden from view" (Trasko, 1989, p.11) and that "nudity of the foot was considered unchaste" (Rossi, 1977, p.41). What is important about this is that there is nothing like covering and concealing a part of the body to make it more intriguing, enticing and captivating. It is the promise of uncovering or revealing this private, intimate, personal, mysterious, secret and closeted part that is so alluring, seductive and stimulating.

The potency of the foot as a sexual symbol in Western culture is exemplified in one occasion in 1840, when a Parisian gentleman noted "Look a Parisienne in the eye and her face registers not a trace of emotion but gaze at her feet and she blushes and turns away" (Trasko, 1989, p.12). Feet and shoes are apparently now considered by psychologists to be "the most common form of sexual fetishism in Western Society" (Trasko, 1989, p.11/12).

However, just like the Cinderella legend this has its root in Ancient China where one of the most notorious examples of foot distortions, contortion and deformation occurred. This was the custom of foot

binding which is believed to have commenced between the 6th and 10th century. There are several theories as to why it began but yet again it was essentially an attempt to obtain a "feminine" aesthetic ideal, that of a small, dainty foot and to set women of privilege and distinction apart. Fig 25.

The procedure would begin between the age of three and eight. The big toe was left free while the other four were bent "back over the arch" and then bandaged in place. "After each bathing, the foot was bandaged tighter and then forced into a shoe one size smaller "in an attempt to obtain a " 'Golden Lotus ' , a foot measuring three inches" Fig 26 (O'Keeffe, 1996, p.405-6). Of course the procedure would have caused tremendous suffering and pain, after "enduring the deformations" women "could only mince along with painful, delicate steps" (Trasko, 1989, p.12), every step agony. Fig 27.

So why did this excruciating and unpleasant infliction continue until the 20th century, only being officially banned in 1949?. Partly because the women who endured the painful disfiguration were held in such high esteem, they were respected, privileged and considered highly desirable. Whereas "women with unbound feet often served as second wives or slaves". Also the deformed foot had become part of the Chinese aesthetic and was considered to be "exquisitely beautiful" touching it brought on feelings "similar to the European sensibility in touching a woman's breast ... purely a question of sentiment and of sensation" (Trasko, 1989, p.12). Like so many traditions of apparel, foot binding became deeply rooted in Chinese society, culture and sexuality.

It would be easy to find this barbarous and shocking but the whole of humanity has an endless history of deformation and mutilation in the name of vanity and attractiveness. "Since the Garden of Eden, the human body has always been considered unfashionable" (Simply to Die For", Sunday Times, Aug.1997, p.4) and "in virtually all cultures ... dress and adornment ... have been used ... to alter the shape of one's body ... from tattooing and neck rings to the dying and curling of hair and the use of high heels" (Ash/Wilson, 1992, p.10). From "the discomfort and inconvenience of head binding ... stretched ear lobes ... peasecold doublet ... dampened calico dresses and crinolines" (Simply to Die For", Sunday Times, Aug, 1997, p.4) to the new breed of modern day Dr.Frankenstein's - the plastic surgeons! Fig 28.

But the one authentically sinister, malevolent and masochistic aspects of foot binding was its obvious intention to inhibit the freedom and mobility of women by literally disabling them. This is dress unequivocally being used as a "powerful weapon of control and dominance" (Ash/Wilson, 1992, p.14). In this way women were made weak, frail, subservient, passive but of most consequence, influence and significance they were made dependant on their male counterparts. Both in the Chinese patriarchal society and in the Western patriarchy the majority of socially and culturally dominant men felt that women must be kept "on a tight rein" and if given "total freedom, or rather total licence" and allowed "to achieve complete equality with men" that they would not "be any easier to live with? Not at all. Once they have achieved equality, they will be your master..." (Miles, 1988, p.68). Or as Maxine Hong Kingston

delicately puts it, "Perhaps women were once so dangerous they had to have their feet bound" (O'Keeffe, 1996, p.443).

However before we become too shocked, repulsed and nauseated by this cruel treatment of Chinese women we should turn our attention to the West and its long running fascination with foot and shoe fetishism and extreme and painful footwear. Western culture and society has long been preoccupied with pedi-mental perfection and the cult of the tiny foot.

Which again manifests itself in the Cinderella tale where the "brutal imagery of deformation cultural and literal, returns, in the Grimm Brothers' tale, the sisters "hack off their toes, hack off their heels to fit the slipper" (Warner, 1994, p.203). The "practice of wearing shoes of the smallest possible size caused the bones of the feet to become twisted and deformed, it appeared and reappeared from the Renaissance to the Victorian era". In the "1860's, some women even had one or two toes removed to better endure wearing the extremely narrow shoes of the period" (Trasko, 1989, p.14).

Again, why did women put themselves through such torment? Women were brought up to believe beauty was their greatest asset, which was essential in order to gain a husband and therefore social and financial security. As mentioned in Chapter 1, in order to be attractive she had to emulate characteristics traditionally associated with femininity, to be frail, dainty, delicate and passive. Professor Marshall from London University clearly laid down the law in 1889 when a Beatrice Webb came to him to discuss her new research project "woman was a subordinate being ... if she ceased to be

subordinate, there would be no object for a man to marry ... marriage was a sacrifice of masculine freedom ... women must not develop her faculties in any way unpleasant to the man; that strength, courage, independence were not attractive in a woman; that rivalry in men's pursuits was positively unpleasant ... if you compete with us, we shan't marry you!" (Miles, 1988, p.224). Women, restricted and discouraged from earning a decent living in the world of work and excluded from the world of power and politics were, like their Chinese counterparts, reliant on men and the institution of marriage and therefore their looks for their survival, combined with an understandable wish to "fit in" with society and to be attractive.

But, like the Chinese footbinding, there is a malevolent side to Western high heels and many of the "sexual connotations ... are far from pleasant" ("A Shoe With a View, Vogue U.K., July, 1994, p.128). This can be seen in the proliferation of fetish footwear throughout the ages and has to be more than just an ironic coincidence that a foot in a high heel mimics the shape of a fully formed Lotus foot. Fig 29.

Extravagant and exorbitant fetish styles proliferated during the Victorian period in the 19th century, a time renowned for its "repression and prudery" which "generated new outlets for sexual expression. The campaign to conceal the female leg under floor-length skirts and boots was so successful that the mere glimpse of a woman's ankle was cause for arousal. Women's ankles, and by extension their shoes or boots, became symbols of more hidden body parts" (O'Keeffe, 1996, p.403). In the 1870's Hellstern and

Argence were established and "created some of the most extravagant fetish boots ever made with heels up to ten and a half inches high" Fig 30 (Trasko, 1989, p.33). It was a mixture of concealment and possibly this puritanical morality that caused people to associate sex and desire with guilt and sin and therefore pain and punishment.

Although I do not understand the desire behind fetishism and forms of bondage and restraints and why moments of pleasure and naturally beautiful parts of the body should be concealed, distorted and connected with discomfort in this strange cocktail of supposed "beauty and torture" or pain and cruelty. Fig 31 (Boccardi, 1993, p.29). To make an intellectual, objective and informed observation would require another thesis. However, I can comprehend how fetish shoes as separate, independent objects can hold a fascination in their unique shape and sculptural form. Fig 32/33.

However, extreme, uncomfortable and slightly ridiculous footwear is not just a thing of the past. As recently as the 1950's, with the invention of the stiletto heel, footwear was taken to new heights and a whole new generation of tottering and teetering ladies was born.

"While platform soles, thigh-high boots and other fashions had a long history, the stiletto was a uniquely 20th century creation" (Trasko, 1989, p/65) made possible through modern technology. By "encasing a metal spigot in plastic" (Trasko, 1989, p.71) which was fully developed in 1956, heels could now become higher and finer than ever before. "The stiletto is the peak of the career of the high heel" (Attfield/Kirkham, 1989, p.8). Fig 34.

But of course "any shoe that jimmied the foot at such an angle hurt" (Trasko, 1989, p.74) and many doctors and specialists warned against the dangers of constantly wearing such high heels. One "educational" pamphlet lists an amazing array of ailments such as "insomnia, eye trouble, sciatica, numbness, twisted pelvis, clumsiness and arthritis, muscle spasms, constipation, fainting spells, menstrual pains, aches in the jaw, eczema, vomiting" and the list goes on. (Rossi, 1977, p.156). Although this example is highly exaggerated there is no disputing the fact that high heels cause a variety of serious and painful back, posture and foot problems.

"By the end of the 1950's pointed toes had become so extreme that some women bought shoes two sizes too large to accommodate their toes" and "at least one account survives of a young woman who had to have a toe removed after wearing the 'current fashionable boots'"(Trasko, 1989, p.71). So things had not changed and women's feet were still being twisted and deformed and they were suffering discomfort and inconvenience in the name of beauty and fashion. Fig 35. Use of the stiletto was restricted, but not because it caused physical ailments or because it broke hierarchical or moral social codes, but because "the minute heel-tip concentrated the wearer's weight so much that floors were often damaged beyond repair. It was calculated that an eight-stone girl in stilettos exerted heel pressure of one ton per square inch". This resulted in the stiletto being banned from "various places from dance halls to aircraft" (Attfield/Kirkham, 1989, p.13).

So why did yet another generation of women adopt or adorn an impractical, uncomfortable and restrictive shoe style? In order to

comprehend this it is necessary to look at the social and cultural climate at the time.

The West had just come out of the Second World War, where women had once again played a fundamental, vital and active role. Winston Churchill declared in 1943 "This war effort could not have been achieved if the women had not marched forward in millions and undertaken all kinds of tasks for which any other generation but our own would have considered them unfitted ... the bounds of women's activities have been definitely, vastly and permanently enlarged" (Trasko, 1989, p.61). Fig 36.

It was true that "the bounds of women's activities" had been "vastly and permanently enlarged" but for a while in the 1950's they appeared to take one step back, in a similar way to the backlash during the aftermath of the French Revolution, discussed in Chapter 1. When you compare the female war role model such as "Rosie the Riveter" Fig 37 to the 1950's role models and sex icons, Jayne Mansfield or Jane Russell and Marilyn Monroe, Fig 38 it becomes quite apparent and in some ways it is understandable. After the hardships and rations of the war years, many women wanted glamour and to be frivolous beauties, to be a part of Christian Dior's 'New Look' which was all about "emphasising every feminine charm" (Attfield/Kirkham, 1989, p.9). To be a part of this new 'modern' world, to look towards a more optimistic future, where men were men, women were women, and everything was simple, safe, conservative and structured. Attfield and Kirkham believe you can only "speculate whether this was a conscious attempt to cast women in a more feminine mould" (1989, p.8). But I feel when you

look at the social and cultural history; the effects of the war, you can be in no doubt that the "New Look" was an attempt to make women more feminine. During the war women completely replacing men in a host of different fields, therefore, their clothes were rationed and toned down, made more functional and practical. Fig 39. The "New Look" is in complete contrast to this It was ultra feminine, the "clothes were meant to be an extension of the female figure and emphasise it" (Attfield/Kirkham, 1989, p.9). The stiletto was irrefutably and undisputedly a female style and has remained to until today. I believe it was a "conscious attempt to cast women in a more feminine mould" and to reinforce a feminine ideal. Fig 40.

So now that the high heel has developed into a symbol of femininity are women eternally doomed to sacrifice practicality, comfort and freedom of movement for the current cultural ideal of what is considered beautiful and attractive? Shall they continue to suffer in the name of vanity and fashion, to be placed on pedestals, objectified and idealised for their 'femininity'? Is there nothing more, are we nothing more? And is this to continue to be purely a female prerogative, are men to be indefinitely excluded from the frivolity of fashion and the high heel?

In this chapter I have examined the heel at moments in its long history which spans across the centuries and throughout the world and although it possibly developed out of a practical need to lift oneself out of the dirt, it has changed and transformed into a symbol of ostentation, wealth and privilege, lifting people into the heavens, to the status of Gods. But it is also full of ambivalence, it has a disquieting aspect, the cult of the tiny foot and restrictiveness, and it

is full of strange connotations, the fetish footwear, a struggle for power and control. The heel can represent both dominance and subordination, the towering seductress or the disabled beauty, "captive and therefore for the taking" ("A Shoe With a View", Vogue U.K. July 1994, p.128).

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Chapter 3

When you first examine contemporary shoe styles there appears to be a disconnected jumble, a careless, indiscriminate confusion of styles, which are constantly shifting and changing with no dominant, over-riding theme or fashion.

Although fashion, women's in particular, "have ranged across the centuries for inspiration -- in the 20th century" this multiplicity and diversity really commenced in the 1960's and the 1970's. Both decades were period of "momentous movements in fashion ... looks and moods came and went with bewildering speed. Designers were pragmatic and eclectic, picking up on movements at street level, plundering historic styles" (McDowell, 1989, p.220). This "cultural eclecticism" has continued through to the 1990's. There are many theories behind 'post-modern eclecticism' and 'fragmentation'. One is "our culture of global mass media" which feeds us so much information that a massive cultural eclecticism is the only possible response ... there is the bombardment of the individual by culture and information from multiple sources" (Ash/Wilson, 1992, p.6/7). From television, radio, fashion magazines, newspapers and more recently the Internet. The turnover of information is immense and fast.

Ironically as the world population grows, cities expand and society becomes dispersed and fragmented, through the accessibility of information and communication, it paradoxically is shrinking and

mixing. The West has become a melting pot not only of people but of cultures and styles.

The other crucial element is the West's immensely powerful and vigorous capitalist, consumer culture. Where not only having money is a cultural ideal but the "conspicuous consumption" and spending it is just as vital therefore technically every market and individual is catered for in some form.

Because of the "parasitical" nature of our culture and society and this "general economy of excess" similarities have been drawn between the 'decadence' of the 1990's and the 1890's. I feel that Elizabeth Wilson is very astute when she observes "there is something about the end of century that impels us to find a dominant theme, a mood ... this impulse is intensified because we are approaching not only the end of a century, but the end of a millennium (Ash/Wilson, 1992, p.3/4).

So although at first, it does appear that Western society has an important consumer culture where "Increased democracy and improved living standards have enabled the majority ... to experience fashion" (McDowell, 1989, p.100) and consumer choice, where there is "no longer fashion, but fashions, a kind of compulsory pluralism of styles" (Ash/Wilson, 1992, p.6) at closer examination it is not that simple. In fact the modern individuals attire and footwear is just as bound, restricted, affected and divided by gender, social, cultural, political and economic factors as the Victorian, Regency or Medieval society and culture and although there is "talk of modernity

... things move slowly" and we are still "bound by strong ties to the past" (Baccardi, 1993, p.31).

This is ineffably illustrated in the strong gender divisions of modern footwear which began to develop from the social and cultural upheaval at the end of the 18th century, (previously discussed in Chapter 1). As men's roles became more entrenched in the public sphere and women's in the domestic, as the modern industrial business man, the 'breadwinner', was born men's shoes began to reflect practicality, power, strength and aggressive ambition, and gay frivolity disappeared. Heels were lowered, ornamentation was removed and colours dulled.

This view or stereotype of masculinity has had over 200 years to evolve. Even with our modern democratic ideal, freedom of expression and opinion men's socio-cultural roles and therefore their shoe styles are so strongly entrenched in past traditions that there have been almost no alterations or innovations since the days of Count d'Orsay or "Beau Brummell". Fig 41/42.

This is in some way, as previously mentioned, accounted for by the fact that "things move slowly" and we are "bound by strong ties to the past". However, the bland banality and absolute uniformity in Dublin's male contemporary footwear market is very disheartening.

Whether it is at the top end of the market e.g. *Brown Thomas* aiming at the successful businessman; the middle class, conservative *Marks and Spencer*, providing classic styles at acceptable prices; the upwardly mobile 20-something e.g. *Topman*,

River Island, Simon Hart, where being up to date with the latest fashions is essential; or at the lowest end of the market e.g. *Dunnes Stores, Barrettes, Pennys* where value for money is the key. The same small range of shoe styles in the same subdued colours appear and reappear. The brogue, ankle boot, working, walking and hiking boot, the runner, the Oxford and the Derby. Fig 43.

Just as the good old, traditional, conservative "pinked and perforated" (McDowell, 1989, p.100) brogue appears in the trendy *Top Man* or the tough, hardy and ultimately 'cool' 'Cat' working boot appears in conservative *Brown Thomas* and vice versa. Ultimately all the man's shoe styles in all the shoe shops are the same. There is absolute "uniform respectability" and "conformity and solidarity rule alongside mediocrity of design and material" (Ash/Wilson, 1992, p.40-41). Men's dress is so entrenched in 'tradition' it has still not been able to shake off hereditary notions of their supposed socio-cultural obligations. To be sensible, rational, tough and above all practical. The Victorian hangover remains and men's shoes, bar the runner, have barely changed or developed in the 20th century.

For example, if a man were to break with tradition and wear high heels which have become such a strong symbol of femininity it would be considered so strange, abnormal and unconventional that it would be presumed that he was trying to say something about his sexuality. There is a very powerful law, just like the Sumptuary Laws of the Middle Ages, the only difference is that it is unwritten - men do not wear high heels.

So high heels after being enjoyed for centuries by men and women alike have become, due to cultural and social changes past and present, an exclusively feminine style. There have only been occasional breaks with these conventions. For example, the cowboy boot with a high heel, is considered acceptable as it is believed to have developed out of the practical need to hold the foot in the stirrup, and not out of an aesthetic need to lift oneself high, to accentuate or flatter the shape of the leg and the sway and swagger of a walk. In this case it is acceptable as it is done out of necessity not vanity, the latter is reserved for the 'fairer' sex.

Stacked heels and platform shoes have occasionally come into style for both men and women, for example, in the 1970's. However, even then these styles are intentionally rebellious and non-conformist and have not infiltrated or penetrated far enough into the main stream to have any permanent or lasting effect on men's footwear.

It is hard to ascertain whether or not high heels have obtained their now rather stringent feminine image because they have always been a part of women's clothing and therefore associated with femininity or because they physically reflect and impose what are traditionally regarded as feminine characteristics; precious, vulnerable, passive, frail, delicate qualities. This is a bit of a chicken and egg situation. It is not which came first that is of importance but that they are in fact an intrinsic part of one another. These traditional and hereditary notions of what high heels say and mean are imbedded in our psyche - they are feminine, sensual and sexual.

And yet, when singer David Bowie adorned a finely tailored suit with shoes with a delicate metal, spiked heel, society did not come crashing down or grind to a halt. Fig 44. Although Bowie has for many years played games and pushed boundaries with regard to gender and dress, some more successfully than others, this is certainly a very rare example in the 20th century of a man wearing an exclusively 'female' shoe style without losing any of his masculinity and still appearing smart and refined.

So even in the repressed, conservative sphere of man's footwear through good, well considered design it is possible to push the boundaries of design and style.

When you first look at contemporary women's shoe styles there appear to be no boundaries, there is such an exorbitant and vast choice both in fashion and footwear. However, this is an intricate and complex paradox. On the one hand it can demonstrate women's emancipation and on the other the inequalities that still remain. It can verify how much weight is still placed on a woman's 'beauty', how vanity and fashion are still seen as female traits and concerns. Or the same choice can be seen to indicate how improved social and cultural conditions, e.g. the right to vote, to own land and property, the accessibility to birth control and divorce, but most importantly better working conditions and opportunities, have given women the right to wear work clothes, for example, suits, trousers, overalls, runners, boots, brogues etc. "Women now have a significant choice ... Reeboks - stilettos" (Trasko, 1989, p.15). Fig 45.

Through gaining a whole new set of social rights and opportunities, women have gained a whole new set of social roles, however, all the old, traditional roles still remain.

Artist Eva Hesse sums up the difficulties in balancing both work and "the social expectations demanded of a woman" in her diary. "I cannot be so many things ... I cannot be something for everyone ... Woman, beautiful, artist, wife, housekeeper, cook, saleslady, all these things. I cannot even be myself or know who I am" (Chadwick, 1991, p.314).

This diversity and confusion of roles, the ones that have come with emancipation and the traditional roles that still remain, can be seen in the diversity and confusion of female fashion and footwear. A woman can now be anything from a seductive temptress to a virtuous angel, a dependent domestic worker to an independent provider or all of these things together and there is a shoe for each and every role.

However, although women have a "significant" and greater choice in shoe styles than men, they do not have any greater freedom of choice. The fact is that social and cultural restrictions apply to both men and women. A woman like a man is automatically read and assumptions about the person are made on the way they dress. Just as a man would be ridiculed for wearing high heels with assumptions automatically made about his lifestyle and sexuality, a woman will often be categorised by her dress and footwear.

There are extreme examples like a woman or a man wearing runners to a job interview, a legal secretary in Doctor Marten boots or a primary school teacher in six inch stilettos. Like a man wearing high heels, all of these shoes would be considered inappropriate as they are not part of a socially recognised 'uniform' for the situation or the job at hand. Interviews are formal occasions and runners are associated with informal, casual occasions. This is an obvious example of what is socially and culturally acceptable, restricting what an individual may wear.

But choosing the right shoe for a woman can be far more complicated. Just a subtle alteration of style, shape, colour can significantly alter the way the shoe and the person are perceived. For example, if a shoe is too bright, high and strappy, both the shoe and the woman wearing it may be seen as being vain, obvious, attention seeking and sexually available. Likewise if a shoe is too dull, sensible, comfortable and safe the woman may be seen as being dull, sensible, comfortable and safe.

The fact that women have gained a great diversity of social roles but that a tremendous weight is still placed on their appearance and 'beauty' means they have a more extensive variety and range of fashion and footwear than men, however, they must choose carefully. Because, as discussed in Chapter 1, society transfers meaning onto clothing and use this as a way not only to communicate but to categorise people into social groups and read aspects of their "personal identity and values" (Breward, 1995, p.1.).

So this appearance of freedom once examined in context is an illusion. Women are just as bound by social and cultural restrictions as men. Unfortunately, I feel that this has resulted in people being so afraid of being stereotyped and read the wrong way that everyday footwear has become exceptionally safe, everything has been watered down because of the need to be accepted without prejudice, to fit into what are increasingly diverse urban communities. There is also the day to day actualities and reality that the working majority, just as in the past, do just need practical, functional footwear in which to 'get the job done'. People want elements of fashion, style and quality but they also want 'classic' styles that are tried and tested. To be honest most people have more important things to worry about such as work, mortgage repayments, bills, transport, insurance or just getting by. When you look at what people are wearing on the city streets of Dublin during the day there is nothing fancy. Shoes are dark, simple and low heeled with a proliferation of runners and trainers. Fig 46. True frivolity and impracticality is still reserved for special occasions or for the new modern aristocracy and nobility - the super models, film stars and rock legends. You need only look at the pomp, tinsel, ritual spectacle of any modern day award ceremony to imagine what grand occasions at the Court of Louis XIV must have been like.

There is a reassuring irony when the Spice Girls teeter around on their modern day 'chopines' to think back to the aristocratic Venetian counterparts of the 16th century. Fig 47. It is both unsettling and reassuring to know as we thunder head long into the 21st century, with all our talk of modernity, technology and urbanisation that we

merely substituted one form of aristocracy and nobility for another. Thankfully, there are a few shoe shops in Dublin that stock unashamedly indulgent, fun, frolicky, frivolous footwear. Unfortunately only for women, but at affordable mainstream prices. *Korkey's* is one example which not only supplies all that standard practical shoe styles, pumps, court shoes, ankle boots, Fig 48 but which is also full of fantastic, fanciful shoes. From glittering platforms, to fake cow hide and leopard spots, to knee high boots in bright pink, blue, red or army camouflage design in blue velvet. Fig 49. At last a spark of originality combined with a sense of fun and adventure. Even the practical Doctor Marten's come in multi-coloured velvet and bright patterned turquoise as well as their standard browns and blacks. Fig 50.

Here it is possible to see design ranging and pilfering from "across the centuries for inspiration" (McDowell, 1989, p.219) and a "pluralism of style" (Ash/Wilson, 1992, p.6), playing with modern materials and techniques, making light hearted, impractical, eccentric shoe styles available and affordable for the masses, a purely 20th century phenomenon. Unfortunately, *Korky's* is part of the minority. There are a few other retail outlets, such as *Topshop*, *River Island* and *Simon Hart*, that stock a small range of fanciful and adventurous styles. These are all aimed squarely at the young female.

Most shoe retail outlets in Dublin stock safe variations of bland, conservative but sellable styles. This is caused by the nature of the contemporary Dublin market. There are in fact few 'shoe shops' left. The majority of shoes are now sold through fashion retail outlets as

part of a total look e.g. *Next, Dorothy Perkins, River Island, Dunnes Stores, A-Wear, Pennys, Marks and Spencer* etc. Because the shoes are being sold as part of a total look they have taken on a secondary role, that of complimenting an outfit and not making it.

All of these large fashion chains rely on pleasing the mass market, where mediocrity, safety and assurance that a style will sell to the broadest range of customers is essential. Furthermore, all these outlets not only appear on Grafton Street and Henry Street (the two main shopping streets in Dublin's city centre) but on the high streets of every major town and in every suburban shopping centre in Ireland. Thereby monopolising and dominating the market, pushing out any competition or diversity.

However, it was extremely disappointing to find the highly respected *Bally* full of the standard, safe, mediocre designs. Fig 51. Although there is no denying the wonderful high quality of material, workmanship and finish there was little in their design content to set them (other than in price) apart from many of the main stream retail outlets which also supply practical, pared down, classic shoe styles e.g. *Marks and Spencer*. Fig 52. When you compare *Bally's* modern designs to their wonderfully unique and elegant creations at the beginning of the 20th century, it appears that they have over simplified, become too reserved, refined and understated, resulting in an uninspiring, unexciting range of designs. This highly competitive modern market, where in order to make their profit, businesses aim at the lowest common denominator and the mass rather than the individual has resulted in a universal but diluted and spineless style.

In order to ascertain whether or not these conservative, functional, comfortable and ultimately boring shoe styles were as endemic as they appeared it was necessary to look for an 'alternative', 'sub-culture' in Dublin. As presumably here amongst the rebellious, anti-establishment and disillusioned youth there would be some diversity.

The 'Chemical Brothers' at the Point Theatre, Dublin (26th November 1997) and 'Powderbubble' at the Red Box Night-club, Dublin (25th October 1997) were two important events in the young alternative calendar.

The 'Chemical Brothers' are a hard-core musical dance duo. The primary objective of the show and the music is to make people not only dance but 'rave', this means the longer, the harder, the faster - the better. So even though this would be regarded as an important occasion this does not mean it is important to 'dress up'. There is no illusion as to why everyone is there - they are there to dance in a hot and crowded environment, this means light, loose and comfortable clothes. It would be futile to wear four inch glittery platforms at such an occasion, as not only can no one see your feet at such a crowded venue, but you would be crippled within twenty minutes, the main purpose, which is to dance, therefore being defeated. So yet again the trainer is triumphant. Fig 54.

Even though trainers and runners began to establish themselves as the comfort and sport footwear at the beginning of the century and continued to take hold throughout the 1970's and 1980's there is no

omitting or ignoring the profound effect rave, dance and drug culture has had in firmly lodging them in the present day youth culture.

However at 'Powderbubble' a highly regarded and reputed 'anything goes' 'fetish' night, the moderate and tame shoe styles were a confounding, disconcerting surprise. Victorian shoe fetishists would have been turning in their graves at the profusion of runners, brogues and even clogs. There was the occasional spiky heel, but again, aware that they would be standing and dancing in a hot, crowded night-club for several hours, the majority opted for comfort and practicality. Fashion and fetishism were not taken seriously or to extremes, the main aim was to be able to party and dance the night away. Fig 55.

This continual focus on function and comfort, not only with shoes but with the whole club attire has led to a predominantly unisex look. Whether this stems from the modern view of sexual equality, de-sexualisation, due to HIV and AIDS, or out of the hot crowded nature of the ever expanding drug and dance culture or just from a pure and simple desire for comfort and practicality only time will tell.

However, it has been demonstrated throughout this Chapter there is an extremely uniform feel to contemporary Dublin footwear right across the board. Even though we are meant to live in a modern consumer culture that is full of eclecticism, cultural diversity and fragmentation. It appears that the working majority, as in the past, not only need but consciously choose practical, functional footwear over high fashion.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has illustrated that by taking a simple, every-day object like the shoe and studying its history and contemporary position correlations can be drawn between the past and present. We can ascertain not only what has changed but what has remained the same.

For example, although affordable shoes are now available to the masses in Western society, a purely 20th century phenomenon, just as in all the periods previously examined true, unashamed, outlandish styles are still reserved for the extremely privileged e.g. the rich and famous. Footwear being used as a tool to set apart and highlight wealth, social standing and privilege "seems to have changed very little over the past 500 years" (Trasko, 1989, p.119).

Likewise, by examining the shoes available and what people are wearing it is possible to see that even in our current 'democratic' and 'liberal' society we are just as bound by hereditary traditions and socio-cultural restrictions as our ancestors, particularly with regard to gender and gender roles.

The one surprising and unusual 20th century trend is that even with our mass consumer culture, our access to vast amounts of information, materials and technology, modern shoe styles are unashamedly retro, conservative and unimaginative, compared to

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the thirtieth is the fact that the

their predecessors and the majority, even if they have the option of high fashion opt for high comfort.

Although I began this thesis with an intense dislike for restrictive, impractical shoes and even though I still do not want to be bound and constricted by tortuous footwear now I also do not want shoes to lose their ability to "be the windows to the soul" (O'Keeffe, 1996, p.12). For I have discovered that when a shoe is allowed to deviate from its fundamentally practical role it becomes "an expression of human personality and feeling for life" and reveals "our dreams and yearnings" (The World of Bally, booklet, 1997, p.3).

Therefore, I now feel although we must not loose our wonderful democracy or allow there to be a tyranny of fashion where it is used as a means of social control and repression, we must also not allow this democracy to become a mass mediocrity but to celebrate and cherish impractical and frivolous footwear for the diversity of individual expression it represents.



Fig 1 Dorothy's legendary ruby slippers from The Wizard of Oz, 1938

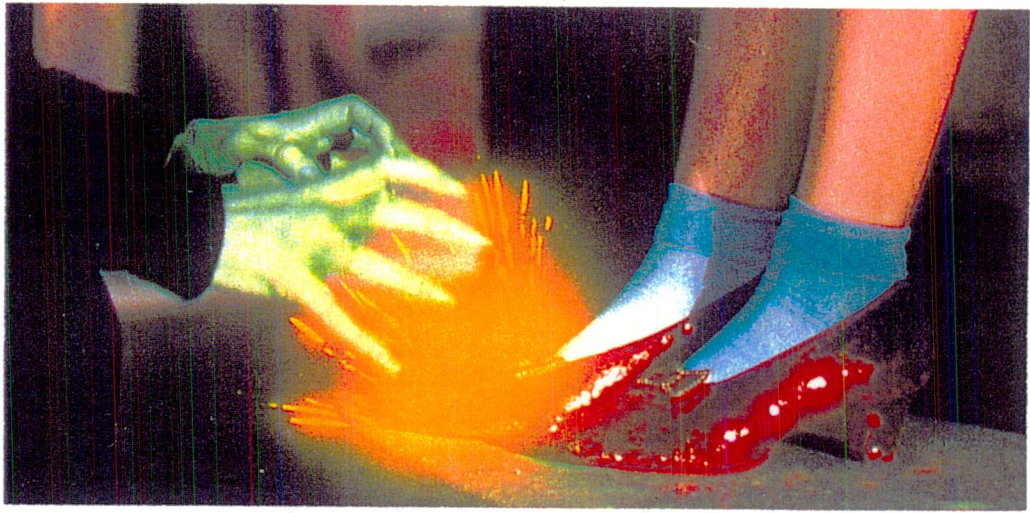


Fig 2 Dorothy's magical shoes at work



Fig 3 This beautiful illustration depicts the now enchanted Prince Charming delicately holding Cinderell's tiny, frail and delicate glass slipper

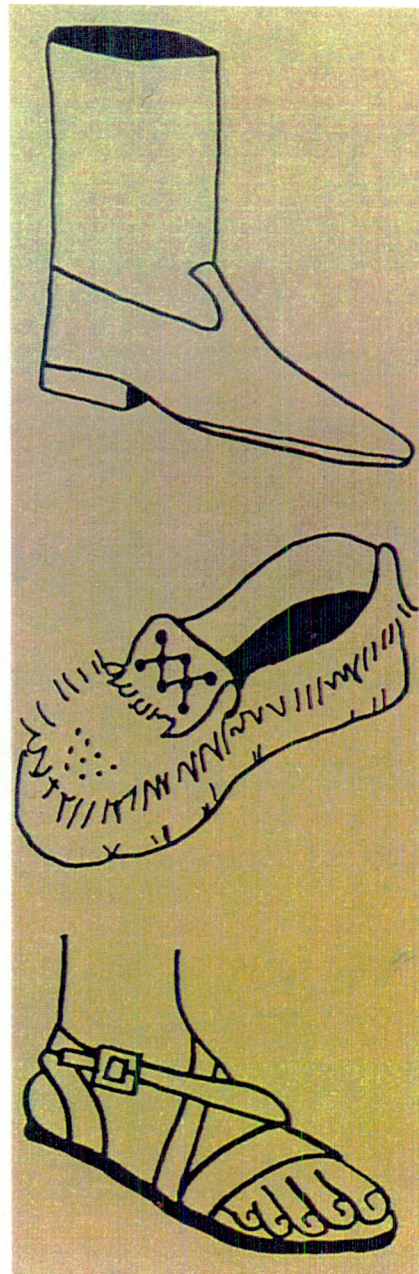
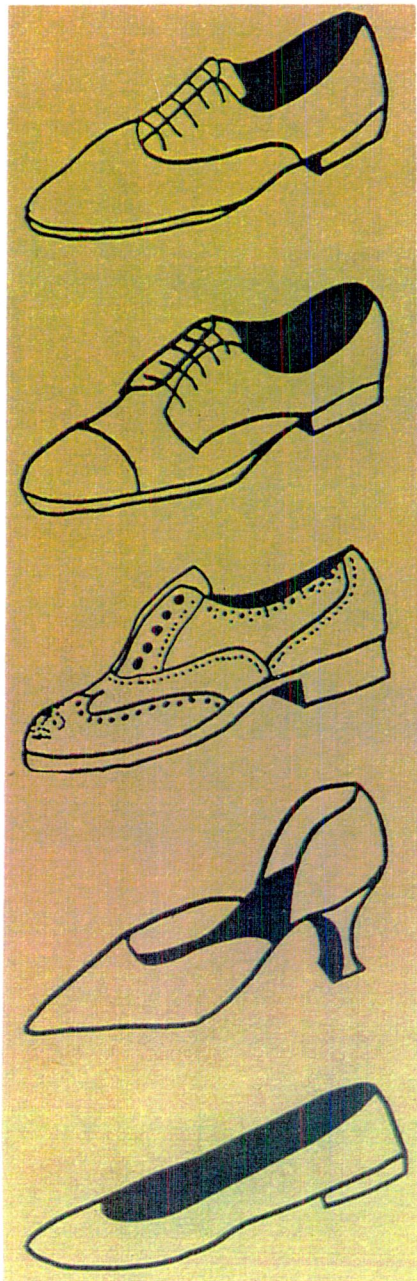


Fig 4 The eight basic footwear types - The Oxford, Derby, Brogue, d'Orsay, Pump, Boot, Moccasin and Sandal

Fig 5 Medieval gentleman wearing a fine pair of poulaine

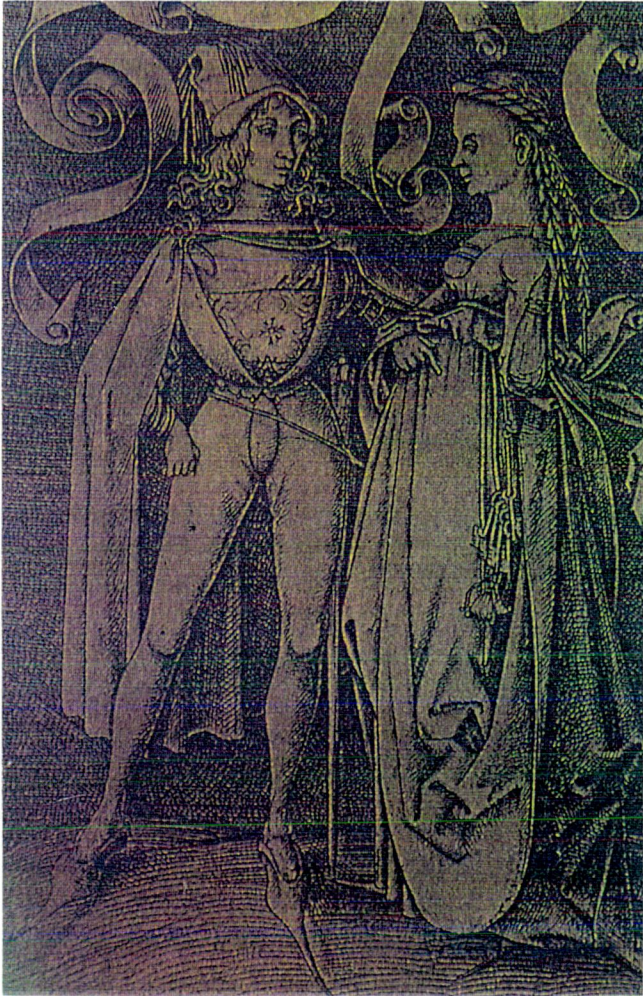


Fig 6 Vivienne Westwood's very direct and cheeky visual play on the medieval poulaine



Fig 7 & 8

The archetypal 19th century gent. When compared to his 18th century counterpart in Fig 8 the extent of the simplification and refinement of dress becomes quite apparent



Fig 9 Right - Wellington Boot from the 1820's which was named after the Duke of Wellington
Left - An extremely plain and unornamented boot from the beginning of the 19th century, 1810-1820



Fig 10 Two wonderful costumes from the 17th century. Both Richard Sackville's and Mary Curzon's shoes are adorned with extravagant and outlandish roses of ribbons. Richard Sackville making sure not to be outdone by his female counterpart

Fig 11 Both the French Revolution and Napoleon were strong influences on male footwear at the turn of the 18th century resulting in the proliferation of the military style boot



Fig 12 This portrait of Madame Recemier, 1805, illustrates the highly idealised female fashion based on the dress of Ancient Greece



Fig 13 This portrait shows beautifully the purity and idealised feminine elegance of the 19th century



Fig 14 Madame Pompadour, 1756, is depicted in a sea of sumptuous fabric, frills, lace ruffles and bows, wearing richly decorated and finely painted high heels



Fig 15 A selection of the tiny, delicate slippers from the 18th and 19th centuries
(a) embroidered slipper 1820, (b) French gold slipper 1855, (c) embroidered velvet slipper, Venice, late 18th century



Fig 16 A particularly impressive pair of Chopines from late 15th century Venice

Fig 17 A less extreme but beautifully decorated chopine from Venice in the 1600's



Fig 18 Venetian courtesan from the 1600's wearing chopines

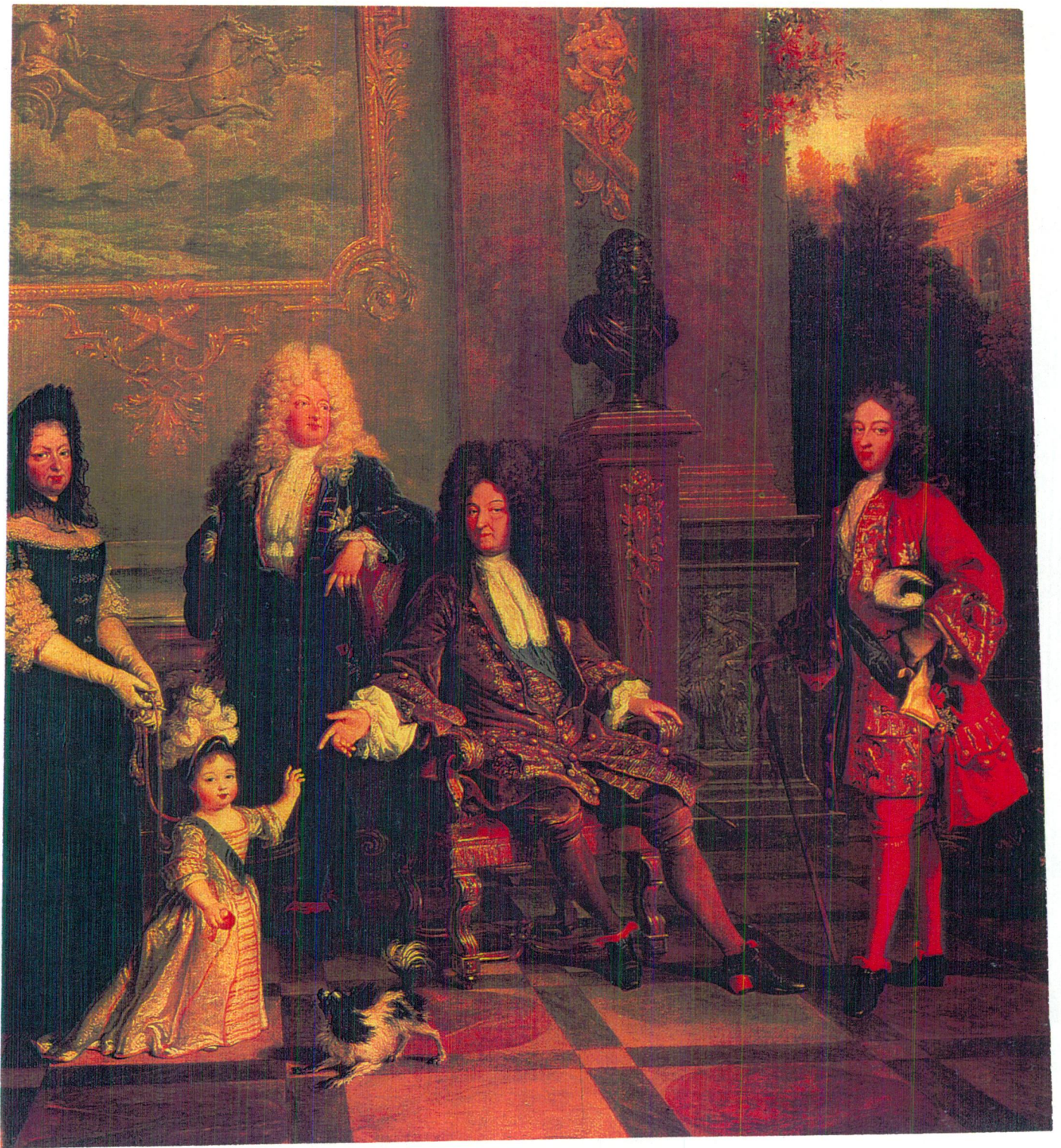


Fig 19 Seated center Louis XIV wearing shoes with the authoritative red heel



Fig 20 Three examples of the fashionable French heels from the 1700's that enabled so many to "totter and fall"

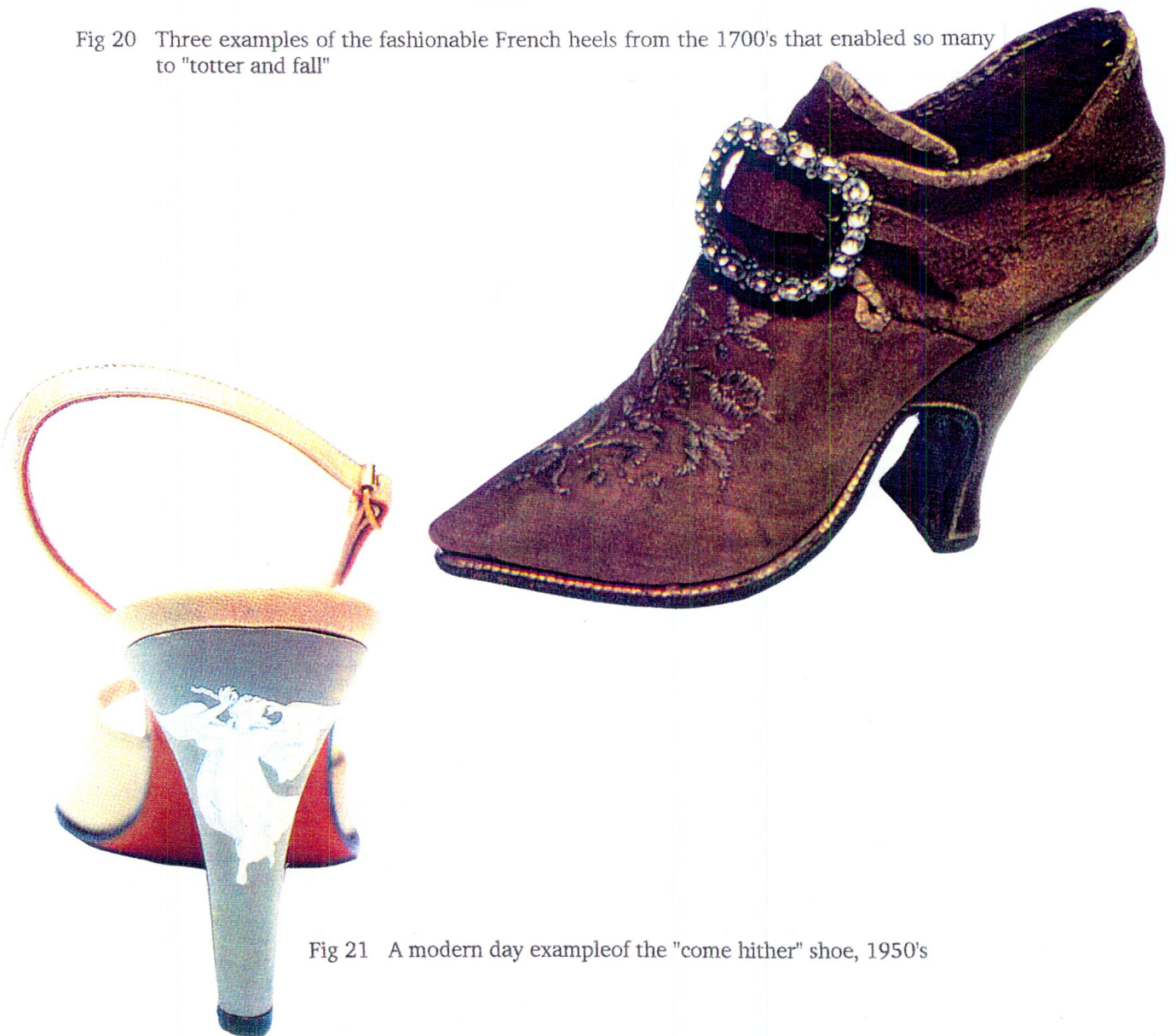


Fig 21 A modern day example of the "come hither" shoe, 1950's

Fig 22 This diagram illustrates how the body alters when wearing high heels. The chest is pushed forward, the buttocks are pushed out, the back arches and the calf becomes more defined

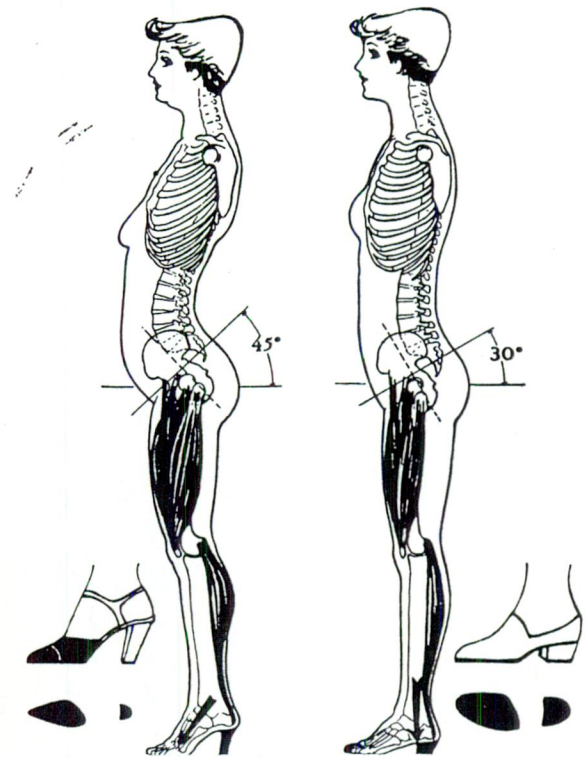
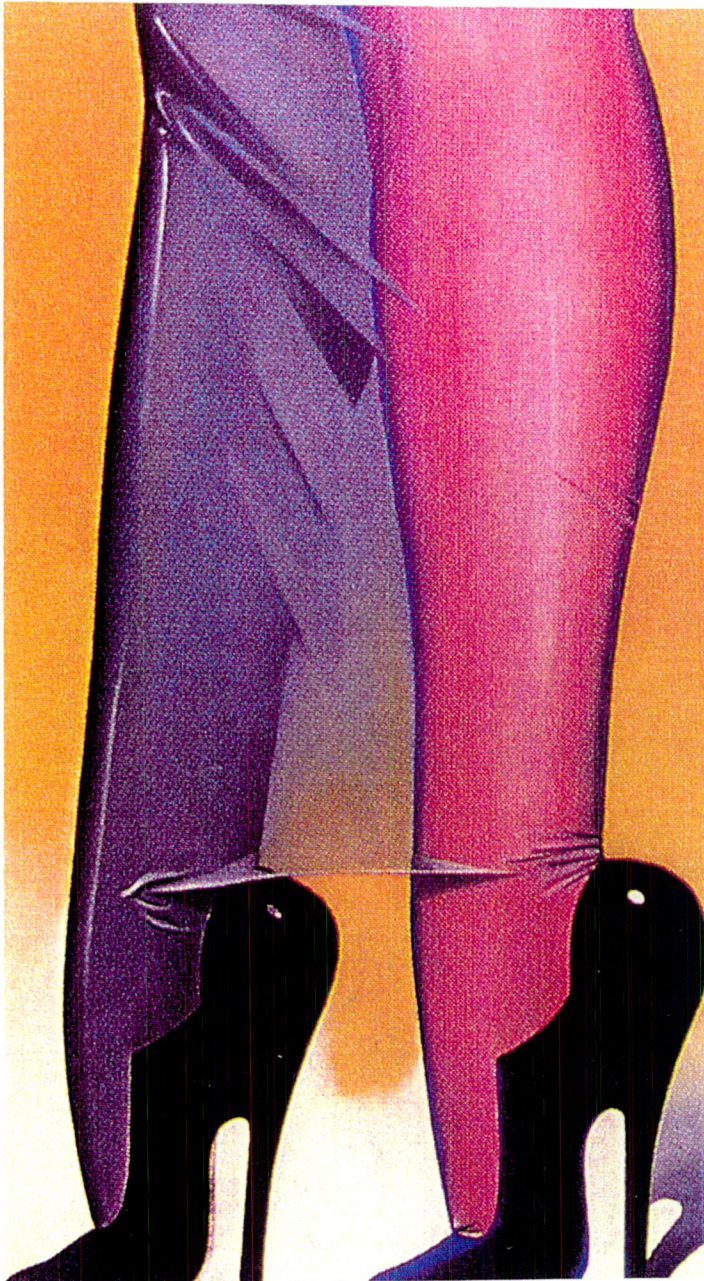


Fig 23 Allen Jones', highly exaggerated but also highly sexually charged, "First Step", 1966

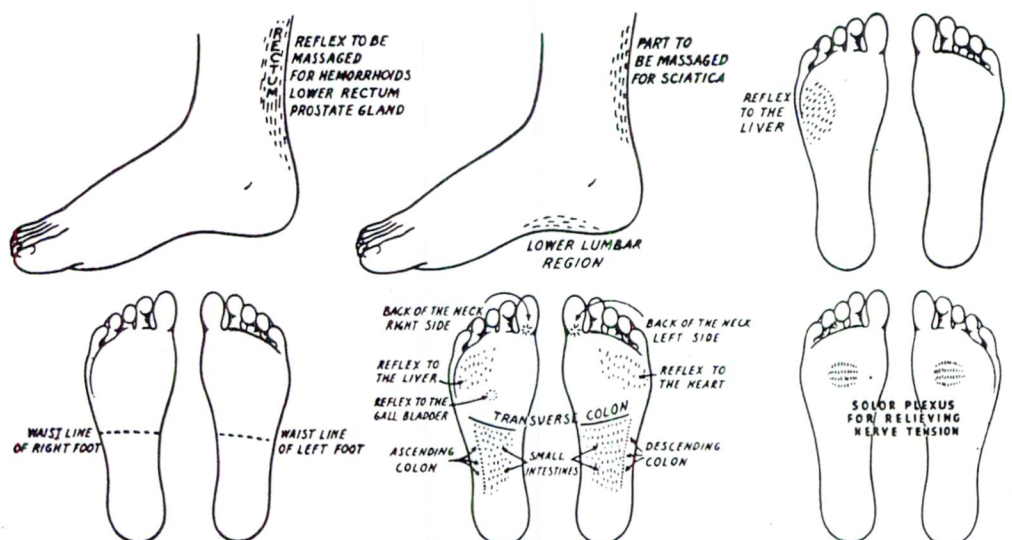


Fig 24 Diagrams showing the foot's different pressure points and how they correspond to different organs, glands and areas of the body, highlighting their acute sensitivity

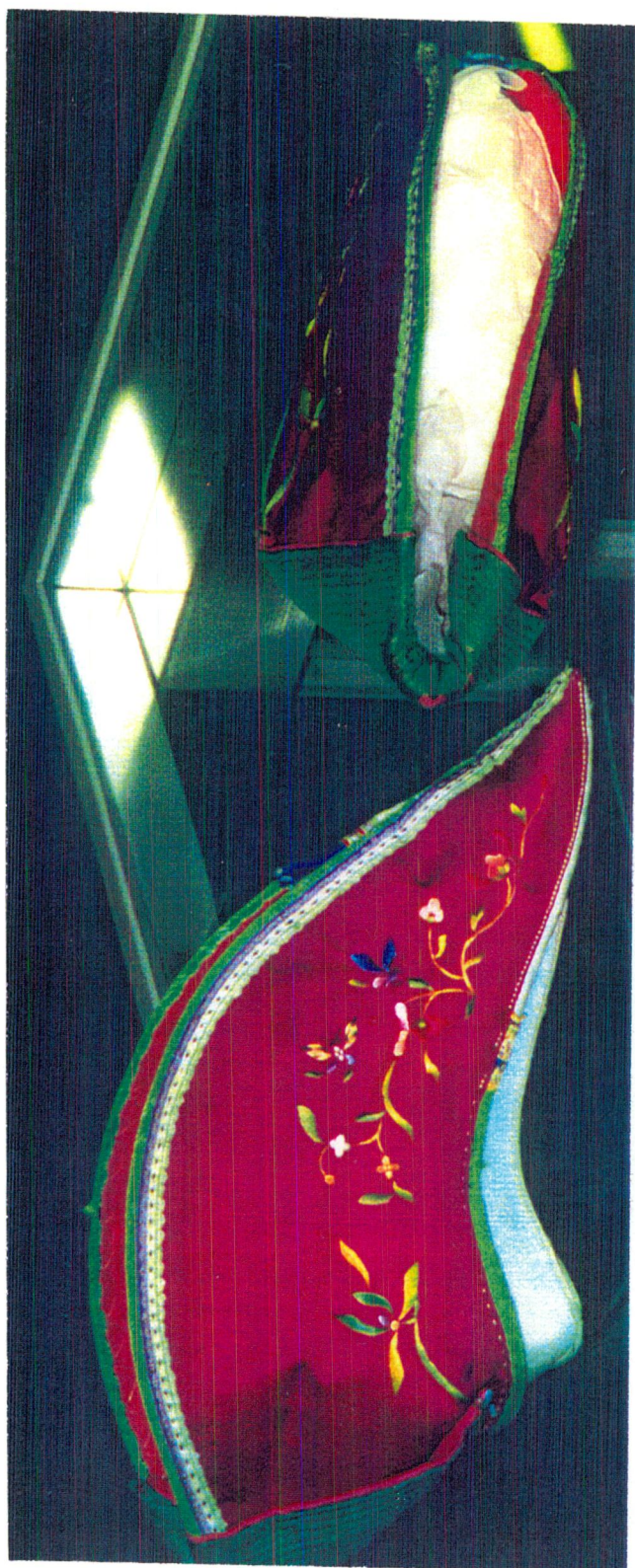


Fig 25 Example of a delicately embroidered Lotus shoe. It is hard to appreciate just how tiny and frail these shoes are until one is seen in reality





Fig 26 A to scale photograph of a Silver Lotus shoe, this means the foot was to measure no more than four inches, Chinese, 1900



Fig 27 The plaster cast of the Lotus foot on the right clearly shows the extent of the alteration and deformation caused by foot binding

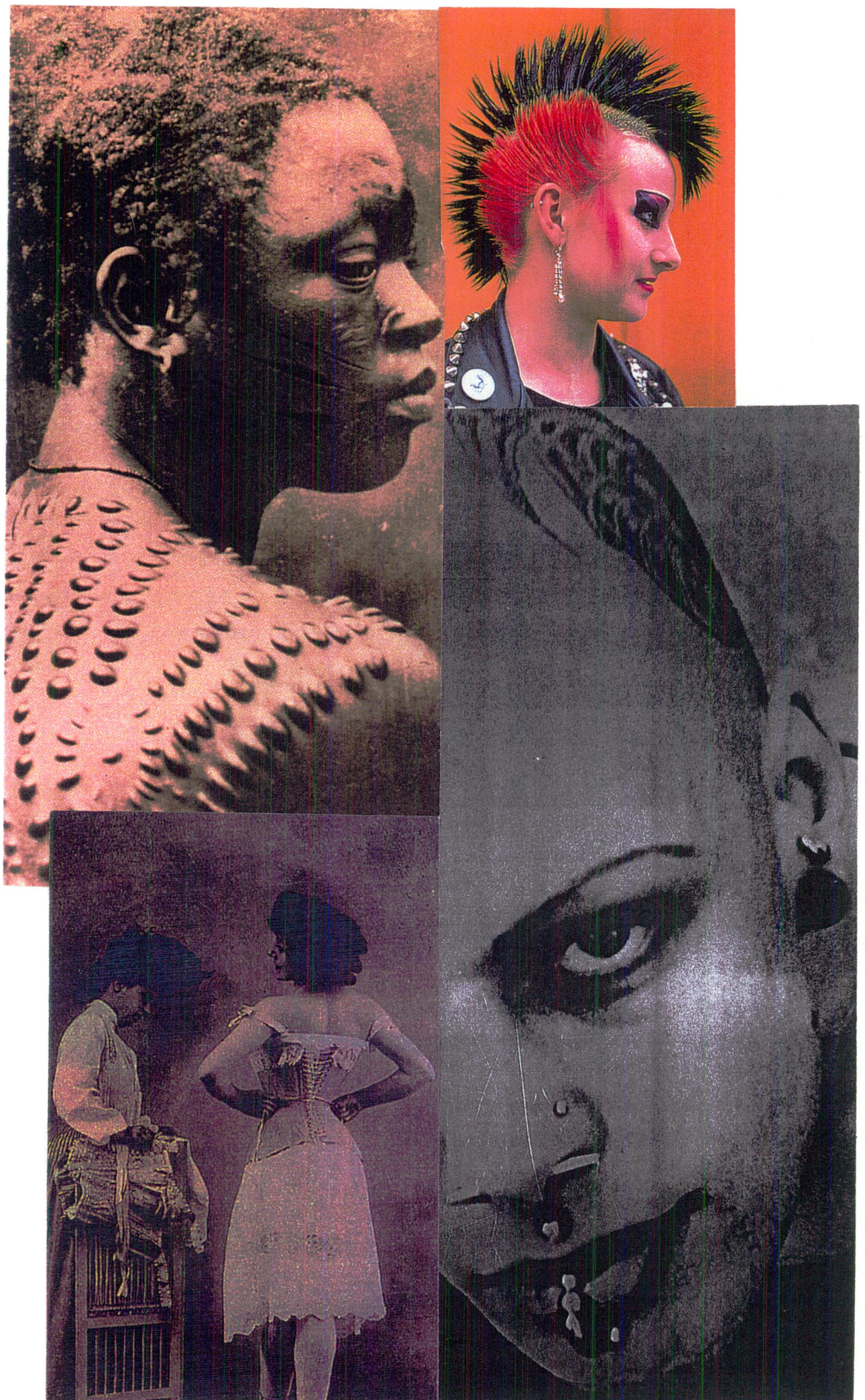


Fig 28 Illustrations from a variety of different periods and cultures showing the extent people will go to in order to make themselves more aesthetically pleasing

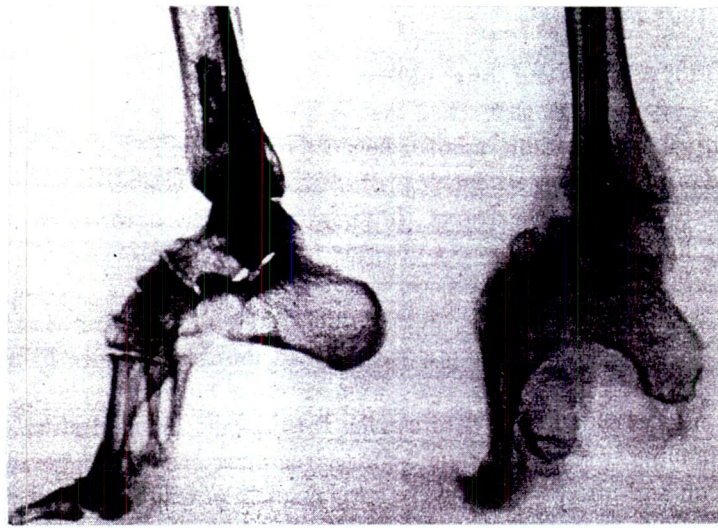


Fig 29 This X-ray of the position of a foot in a high heel and an adult Chinese bound foot shows the startling similarity of shape and position



Fig 30 A magnificent Hellsten and Sons creation from 1923

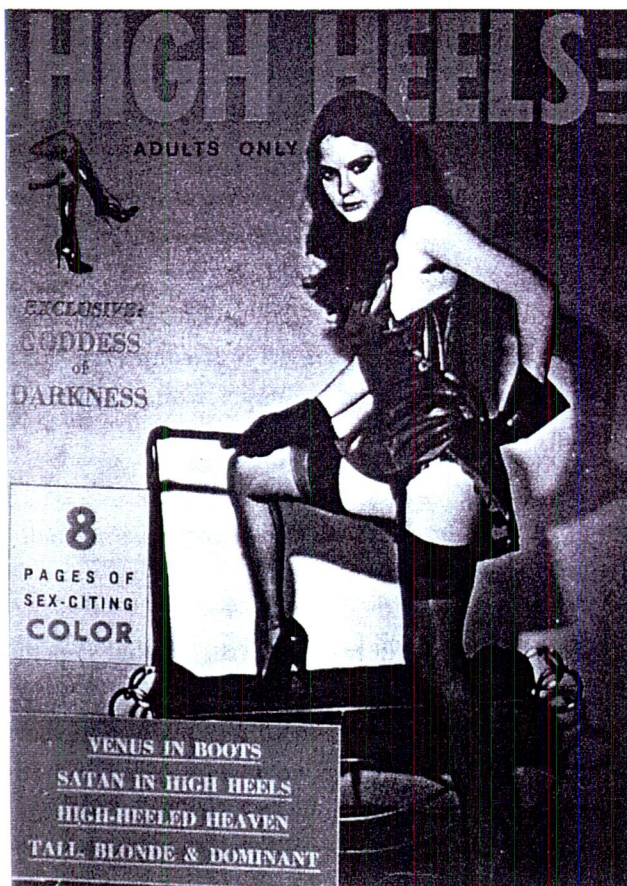


Fig 31 In bondage and fetish magazines the shoe continually reoccures as a crucial element

Fig 32 Some of the more visually stunning fetish shoes from the 1900's



Fig 33 This shoe is purely for show, with its 11 inch heel that extends past the tip of the Vienna 1900

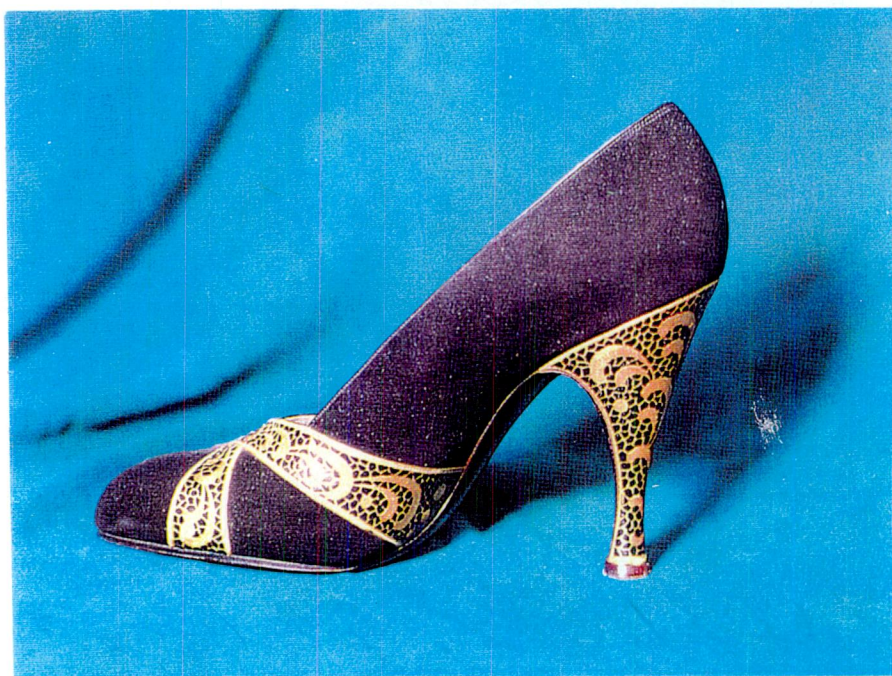
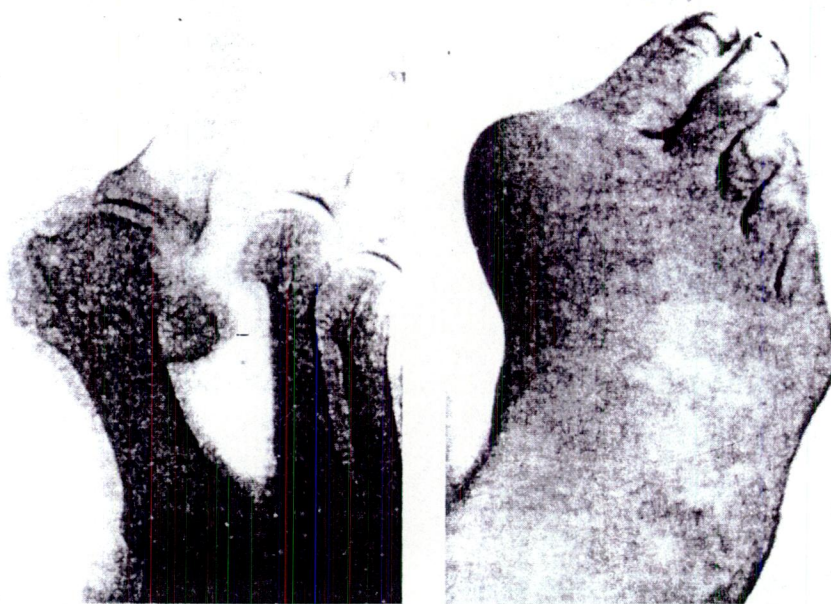
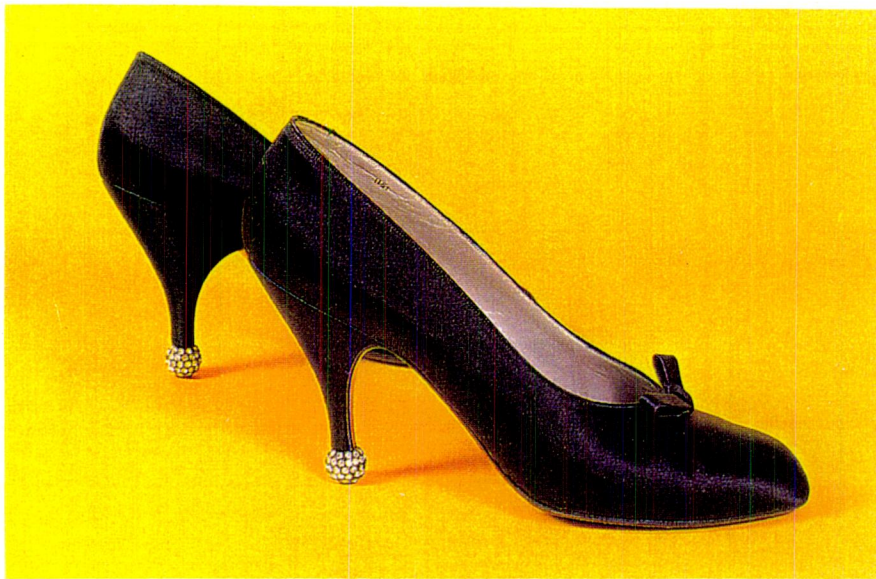


Fig 34 Stilettos by Roger Vivier from the 1950's

Fig 35 An example of the damage that can be caused by wearing ill fitting footwear



Fig 36 Women ready to do their part for the war effort.

Fig 37 The 1940's female war role model "Rosie the Riveter", tough, hard-working and with the situation firmly under control



Fig 38 The hardship of the war years appears to be forgotten in the glitz and glamour of the 1950's sex icons and female role models, Jane Russell and Marilyn Monroe



Fig 40 The ultra feminine 'New Look'



Fig 39 In order to make clothing more functional and practical, women had to get rid of their female accessories



Fig 41/42 If you compare the 20th century highly fashionable 'Cat' shoe with the shoes worn by the Prince of Wales in 1859, it is very easy to see how little has changed



Fig 43 The Brogue, Oxford and Derby are the most common recurring male shoe styles, always in dark, somber colours



Fig 44 David Bowie in his wonderful and stylish spike heeled shoes



Fig 45 A collage of shoes from various Dublin retail outlets showing the range of choice available to women in contemporary Dublin

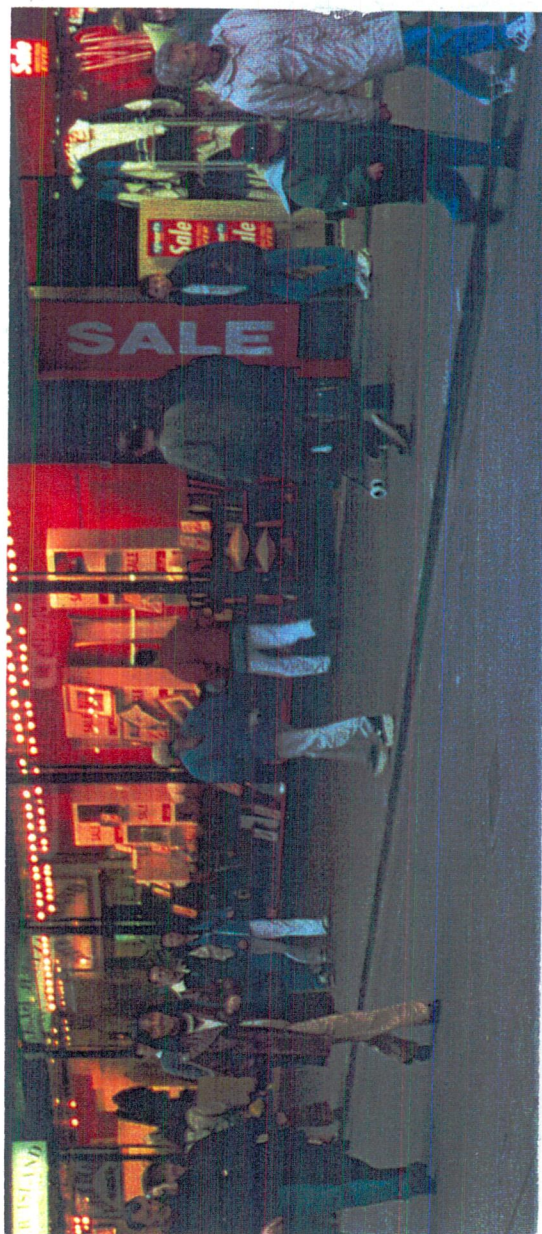


Fig 46 A collage of photographs of Henry Street and Grafton Street during the day highlights the immensely casual styles opted for by the majority in Dublin's city center

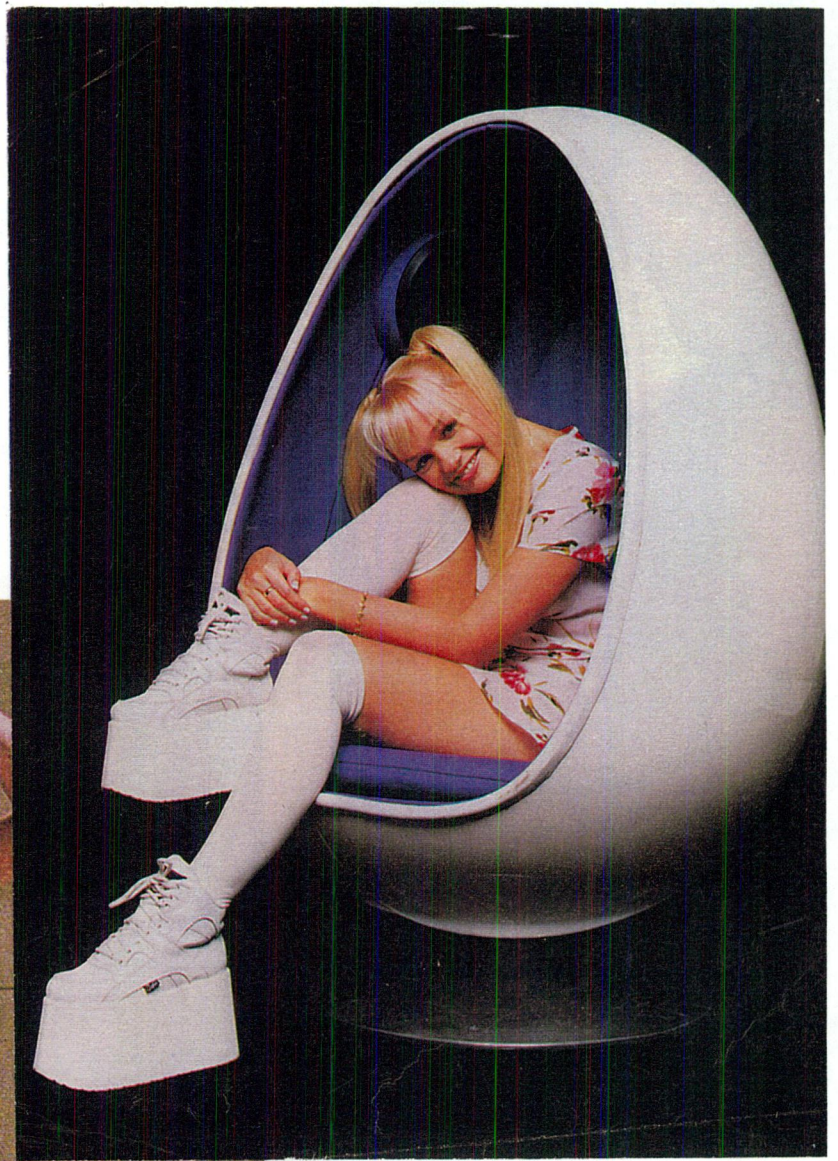


Fig 47 Mel B and Emma from the Spice Girls wearing their infamous platform trainers, almost causing as much fuss as their 16th century Venetian counterparts



Fig 48 Korkey's, practical and conservative shoe style



Fig 49 A selection of *Korkey's* more adventurous shoe styles



Fig 50 The amazing selection and variations of the basic Doc Marten boot

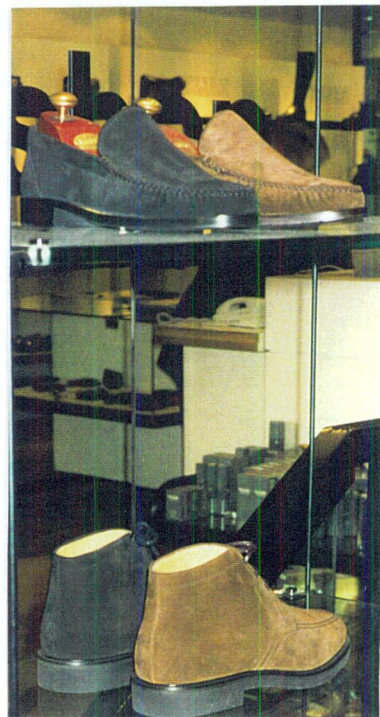
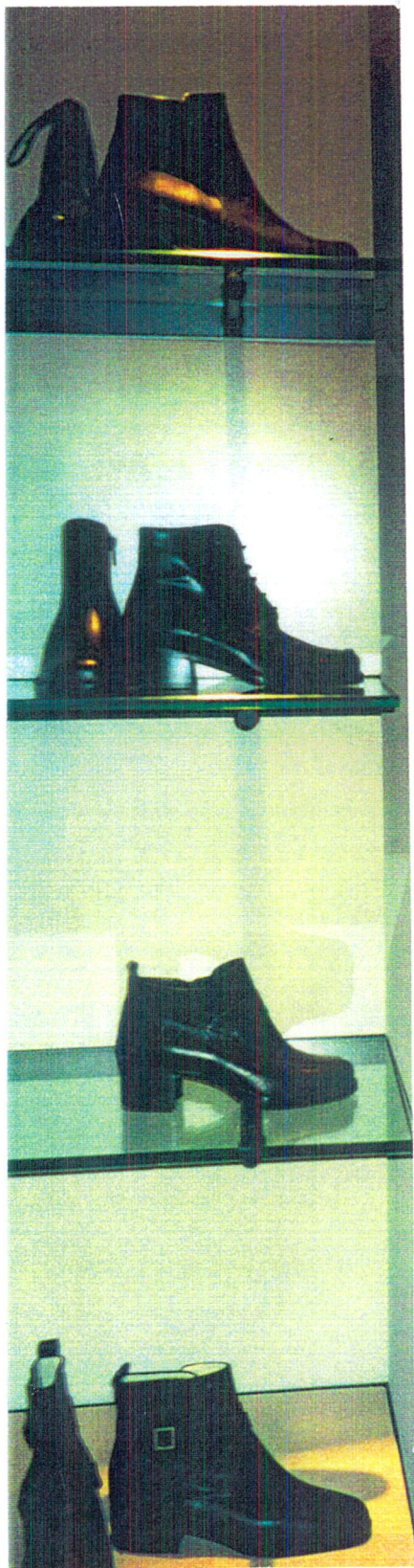


Fig 51 A selection of shoes from *Bally*. Although beautifully made the designs are very mainstream



Fig 52 Marks & Spencer shoe designs are very similar to those available at Bally



Fig 53 Some examples of *Ballys* much more imaginative creations from the beginning of the century

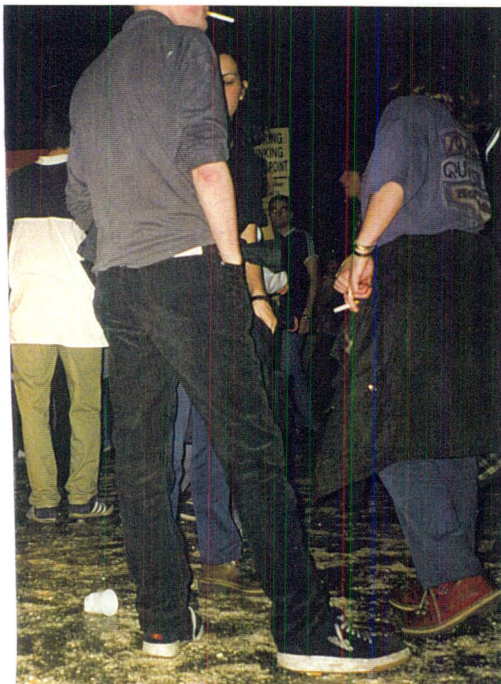
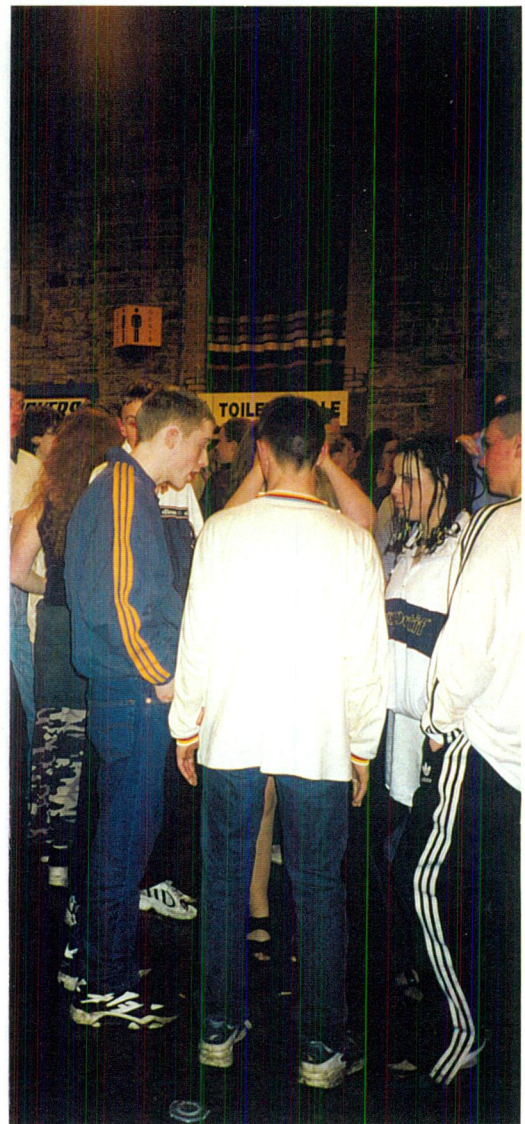
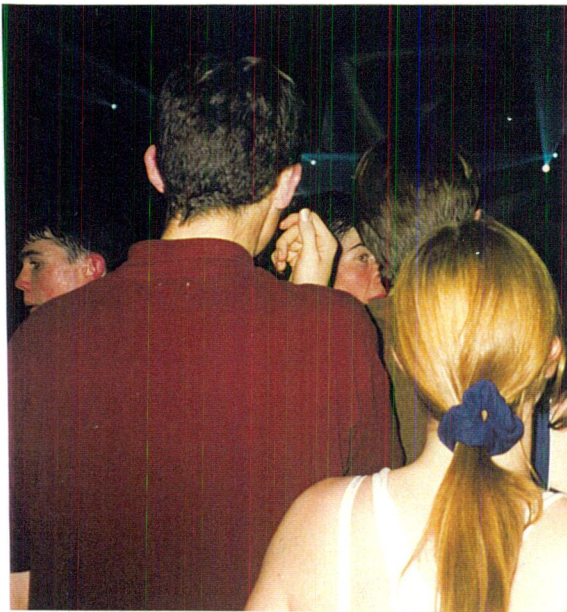
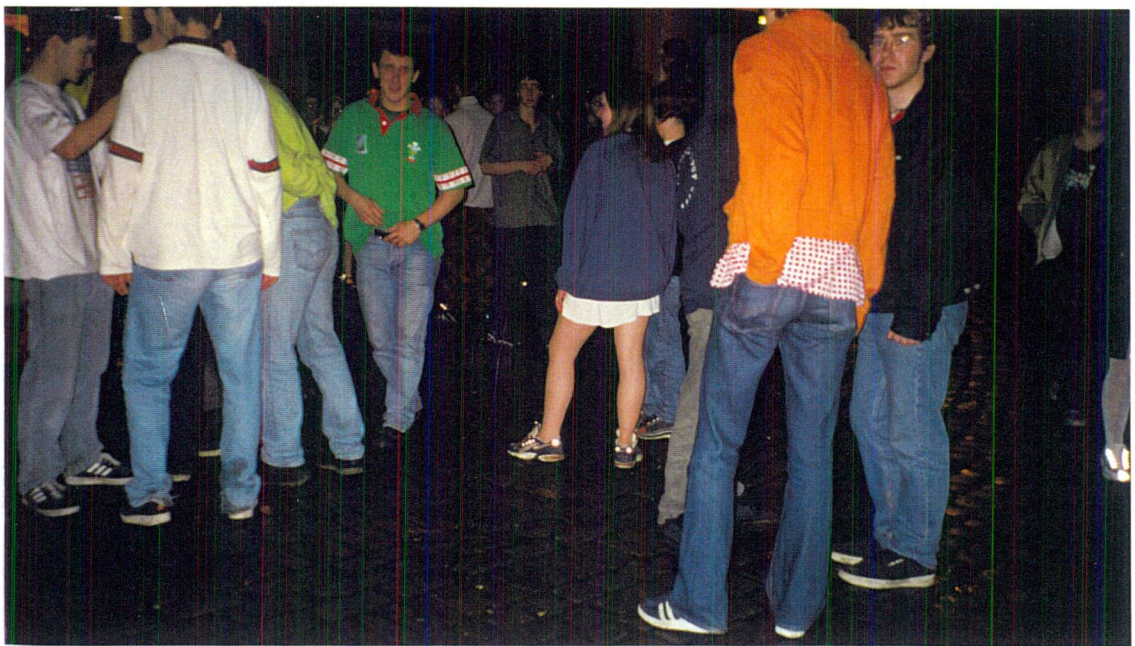


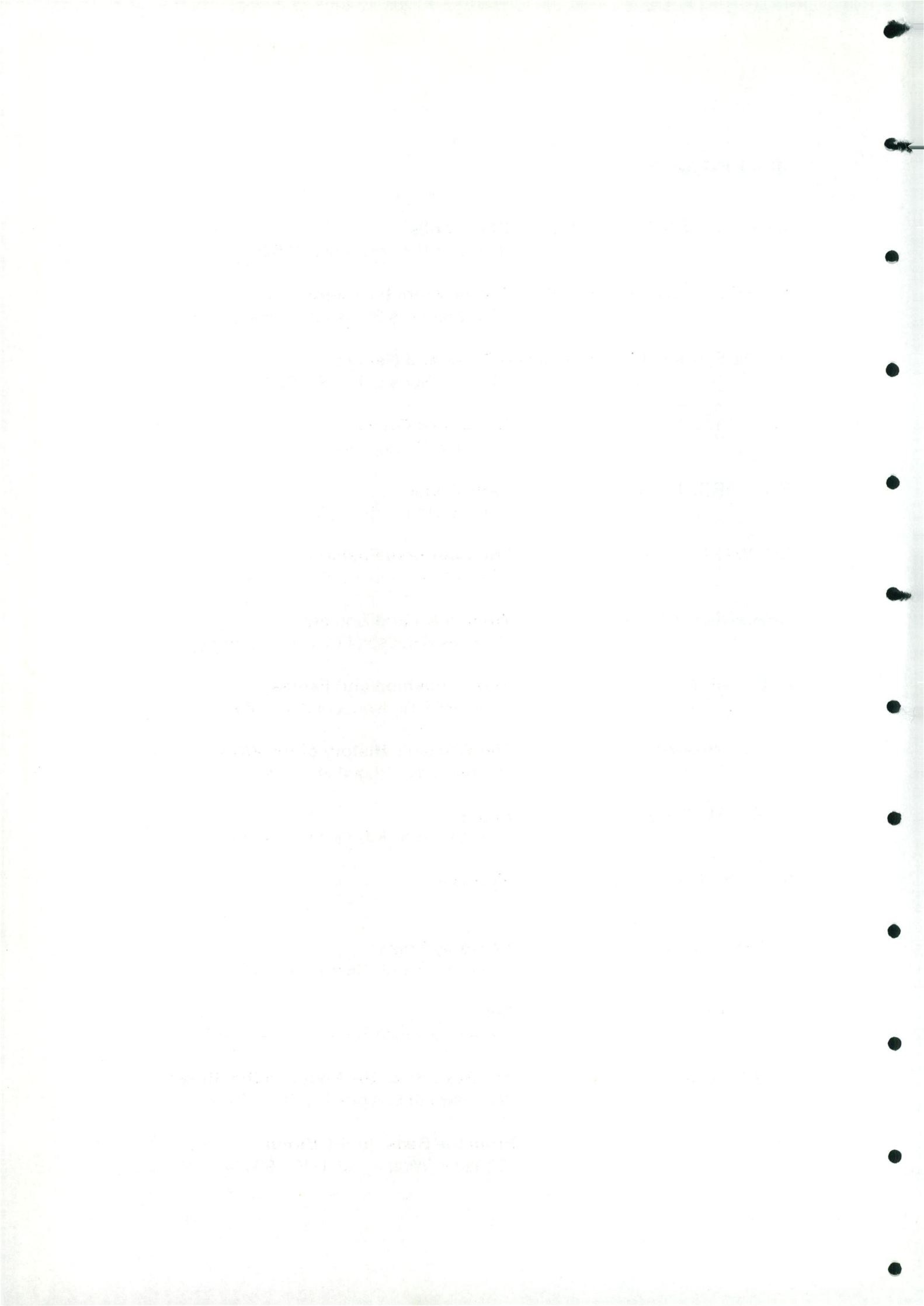
Fig 54 At the 'Chemical Brothers' concert comfort is essential in the hot crowded environment



Fig 55 Photographs of the surprisingly tame shoe stylesto be found at 'Powderbubble', a fetish night

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