

## Everything Old Is New Again: *The History of Regency Fashion*

- *The fashion of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was the opposite of what it became in the Regency period. It featured enormous hoops and petticoats that were actually petitioned against because they were thought to be impractical. Thankfully, this mode of fashion went out... of fashion, and along came the Regency Period, or, Those Really High-Waisted Dresses that Elizabeth Bennett Wears.*
- *Regency Fashion (women's) based on Classical Principles:*
  - *“derived originally from Greek statuary [and]... employed thin... materials [that] tended to cling, with an emphasis on vertical lines” (347)*
  - *The ancient ideal of Beauty was based on symmetry. This can be seen in certain aspects of the fashions of the Regency period.*
  - *Its goal was to reveal shape and form, as can be seen in Pride and Prejudice: “though he had detected with a critical eye more than one failure of perfect symmetry in her form, he was forced to acknowledge her figure to be light and pleasing” (Austen 16)*
  - *Influenced by political events, such as the fixation upon Egypt in 1804, and the Peninsular War, which brought Spanish flavor to Classical fashion (348)*

### *Works Cited*

*Cunnington, Cecil Willett and Cunnington, Phillis. Handbook of English Costume in the Nineteenth Century. London: Faber, 1967.*

## Creating 19<sup>th</sup> Century Fashion from a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Perspective

### Women:

- Find a long skirt, and pin it under a short-sleeved shirt that mimics the Regency style
- OR, go through your Prom/Homecoming collection, and wear a dress with a shrug or shawl
- Curl your hair and pin it up. Feel free to go crazy with feathers and/or jeweled/pearly headbands.
- Invite a friend to take advantage of a BOGO sale at Payless and pick up a couple of pairs of ballet flats
- White gloves (elbow length), shawls, little coin purses, and simple jewelry are all acceptable accessories.

### Men:

- For breeches, simply roll your slacks UNDER, and then pull up your tights (or long socks, if that makes you feel more masculine...)
- Vests are really "in" right now, so if you own one, kudos! Wear it over a white button-down or a really puffy-sleeved pirate shirt. You know, if you have one of those lying around.
- For shoes, try low-heeled dress shoes, boots, or perhaps even penny loafers.
- Find a long winter coat, like a pea coat, and pin it according to the cut predominant during the Regency Era.
- If possible, bring a top hat and white gloves!

### Works Cited

<http://www.janeausten.co.uk/magazine/page.html?pid=181&step=4>