

Fashion in restoration england essay sample



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The ribbons and bows accenting the short soft lines of the male costume demanded elegantly controlled flourishes to give them just treatment. The Restoration gentleman needed a swaggering, elegant movement in order to carry off the full weight of the layers of fabric and ribbons. He dominated his costume with assurance and delight, from the tip of his square-toed high-heeled shoes to the great plumes of his broad-brimmed hat. A man of fashion had to manipulate a number of accessories such as a walking stick, muff, snuff box, and handkerchief.

The fashion extremists or “ fops” of the Restoration period, who especially enjoyed these items, exaggerated their movements, overdid their flourishes and hand gestures, and minced, rather than strode, across a reception or ballroom floor. They would turn their heads with an abrupt twist to give a flounce to the curls of their periwigs; would clutch their muffs to their chests and peep over them; would toy excessively with the ribbons on their walking sticks; and would flourish their handkerchiefs in a ludicrously ostentatious manner.

The gentleman is wearing the new coat, a longer and fuller version of the doublet. It features cuffs, turned back and decorated. Under the coat he is wearing a sleeved waistcoat in a stripe. The waistcoat sleeves can be seen below the coat sleeves and above the puff and ruffle of the shirt. He wears the new fashion in neckwear, the cravat and has chosen the Steinkirk style. His sword is fastened to a baldrick and his waist is encircled by a sash. On his legs he wears stockings and heeled shoes.

Not seen, he wears a modest style of breeches, covered by the coat. On his head is the full-bottomed wig. The size of his wig demands that his hat, a tricorne is carried *ala chapeau bras*, rather than worn. Ladies The lady's movement also had a graceful, sensuous vitality and an attractive bounce that epitomized the spirit of the times. The waist would have been flexible but firmly controlled with never a sag in the middle, since most gowns contained boning and corseting.

From Pepys's diary, other commentators, and artists of the period, one can learn that ladies preened and pranced like pigeons, fluttered their eyelashes, and manipulated their skirts and their charms with a complete knowledge and assurance about the effects they were creating. The fan was also for the Restoration lady the most important accessory and was used as a weapon in the game of love that often seemed to have a life of its own.