Preserving, displaying, and insisting on the dress: icons, female agencies, institutions, and the twentieth century First Lady

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Abstract
The United States Constitution does not outline the duties of the first lady, in sharp contrast to the president, for whom it carefully delineates roles, rules, and limitations. Instead, it has been up to a combination of individual women, institutions like the Smithsonian, popular culture, and political discourses to define (and constantly redefine) the position. The term "First Lady" itself is problematic because there is, in fact, no specific or fixed definition. Throughout American history, the role of the first lady has manifested itself based on the historical time period and the prerogative of the individual first lady. Over the course of the twentieth century, as women gained increased independence and opportunities to act in the public sphere, the cultural and political constructions of the first lady became more restrictively defined to the domestic roles of wife and mother. Jacqueline Kennedy, Betty Ford, and Hillary Clinton function as a revealing trio of late twentieth century first ladies who engaged in what Betty Ford identified as “the power of the position” in ways that simultaneously circumscribed their options as powerful public women while also leaving room for each to pursue personal agendas, initiatives, and agencies. Ultimately all three divulge the challenges, limits, and possibilities in – to paraphrase the subtitle of Hillary Clinton’s final publication as a first lady, An Invitation to the White House – making one’s female self “at home with the history of the first ladyship.”

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Comments
First printing press in the British Colonies of North America, established in Harvard University, 1639. Independence of Portugal, 1640. Civil War in England, 1642. The collars of the dresses. Metal and wooden corsets. Display of fine lingerie. The elegant lady wore the Manteau, an upper dress that swarmed at the back and fell down as a train. For example, heavy gold and silver brocades became fashionable fabrics. Deep necklines let the waist slide down. In order to keep the décolleté free, the hairstyle, held by ribbons, in contrast, aspired upwards. This so-called Fontange was the female counterpart to the allon wig of the gentlemen. It was attributed to the Duchess of Fontanges, a mistress of Louis XIV, and remained so until the beginning of the 18th century. Dress (XVII Century). In the twenty-first century, the steady spread of globalization, of branded culture, is once again providing fertile ground for the emergence of the contemporary dandy. The figure of the dandy presents a sartorial and behavioral precedent that allows for the celebration of beauty in material culture while cultivating an aura of superiority to it, and the early twenty-first century has seen a resurgence of interest in the traditional purveyors of material status. Modernism in the twentieth century continued to struggle to establish itself as a positive choice in British design culture, yet the periods of flirtation with clean lines and somber formality were intense and passionate, a momentary reprieve from the ludic sensibilities British designers more commonly entertained. The youngest fashion designer to be listed on the International best-dressed list, Calvin Klein is known worldwide for his extravagancy in the fashion industry. He owes it all to his mother who instilled in him a love of art and fashion. Calvin started his career as a loner who taught himself how to sketch and sew. For that, he even worked at his father's grocery store to make extra money. In the year 1968, Klein founded his own company, Calvin Klein Ltd., with his friend as his business partner. In the year 1973, Klein diversified his company's line of manufacturing and got engrossed in other sections like sportswear etc. and giving birth to American leisurewear. He is also known for his line of menswear and women's swear. He also designs home collections, fragrances and cosmetics. Preserving, Displaying, and Insisting on the Dress: Icons, Female Agencies, Institutions, and the Tw Rachel Morris.

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