

Americans Are Increasingly Revealing Their Self-absorption in Their Clothing

Yesterday afternoon an email from an Intellectual Takeout reader arrived in my inbox, asking what I thought of the jacket Melania Trump wore to visit migrant children near the Mexican border. Having read a [previous article](#) I wrote on Melania's fashion choices, this reader asked if I could weigh in with some thoughts.

Pulling up my search engine, I quickly found a picture of the First Lady boarding her plane. I admit, my eyebrows went up *just* a tad when I read the words on her jacket:

– *NowThis (@nowthisnews)* [June 21, 2018](#)

In the midst of the fallout, the First Lady's staff ran interference, [assuring](#) the American public that her jacket was simply a "fashion choice," not intended to convey a message of any kind. Unfortunately, Melania's record of appearing to send subtle messages with her clothing (remember the [pussy bow blouse](#) during the 2016 campaign?) makes that spin a little harder to believe.

But even as I was tempted to shake my head at Melania's messaging, I had a sudden thought. How different is her slogan-emblazoned clothing from the rest of the American public's? One can hardly walk down the street or go into a store without some witty or sarcastic message like the following examples screaming from a t-shirt (or the seat of someone's pants).



Credit



Credit

Attitude isn't limited to adult clothing, either. Children's clothes also seem to have a special niche for snark and disrespect.



Credit



Credit

We laugh at these types of messages, but have we ever stopped to consider how they might be affecting our attitudes?

Research demonstrates that dress greatly affects how we behave and view those around us, and for many of us, our own personal experience underscores this idea as well. If we're dressed like slobs, we tend to behave like slobs. And in the same way, if our clothing spells an "I-don't-care" or a narcissistic attitude, are we not likely to act accordingly?

Melania Trump is the First Lady, and as such, is and should be held to a higher standard in the clothing she chooses. But finger-pointing always involves—or should involve, rather—pointing one back at ourselves. If we are displeased about the insensitivity and narcissism which her clothing displays, shouldn't we be willing to evaluate our own wardrobe choices for the same attitudes?

We might go a long way in diminishing society's troubling attitudes of flippancy and self-absorption if we stop to consider the ways in which we ourselves send the same messages.