

It *Did* Happen Here

Politics and Literature in Trump's America

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Abstract

How could a person like Donald Trump, considered by many intellectuals a character stranger than fiction, be elected president of the United States of America? In the aftermath of his election, scholars, novelists and artists from all over the world were quite unanimously stunned, and yet fiction had repeatedly foreseen and widely anticipated the recent turn of events. This essay aims at discussing how literature and the humanities can help us cope with events that, as in the case of Trump's election, directly challenge our elemental notion of a separation between reality and imagination. As part of my interest in the relationship between politics and literature, the novels I comment upon are meant to offer a series of telling examples of how literature has anticipated, mocked and dramatized situations that closely resembled the awkward predicament we are currently experiencing.

Keywords: Donald Trump; post-truth; American politics; American literature; political fiction.