

Make Arcadia Great Again

Appalachia, Southern Pastoralism and Contemporary US Politics

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Abstract

Read through the lens of Southern Modernist political thought, the notorious slogan used by Donald J. Trump in his presidential campaign – «Make America Great Again» – bears striking similarities to the traditional Agrarian way of looking at history: a deep-seated nostalgia for a time long gone which is by all means a rhetorically-constructed past rather than an actual historical moment, a pastoral topos bordering the realm of pure fantasy and that of utter lies. Whether as a deconstructed myth or as a conscious revival, this element is still alive in southern letters. This essay will draw parallels between the current status of American political discourse and Southern Agrarian philosophy by considering some tenets of US South pastoralism as they are presented in the Twelve Southerners' manifesto, I'll Take My Stand, together with examples taken from contemporary writings on and from the South to show how this region inevitably identified with Trump's controversial views.

Keywords: pastoralism; Appalachia; US Politics; US South; Donald Trump.