Divorcing The Dictator

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an analysis of the ways that general rafael trujillos dictatorship 1930 1961 pervaded everyday life in the dominican republics capital santo domingo

contrary to our stereotypical views dictators often introduce elections in which they refrain from employing blatant electoral fraud why do electoral reforms happen in autocracies do these elections destabilize autocratic rule the dictator s dilemma at the ballot box argues that strong autocrats who can garner popular support become less dependent on coercive electioneering strategies when autocrats fail to design elections properly elections backfire in the form of coups protests and the opposition s stunning election victories the book s theoretical implications are tested on a battery of cross national analyses with newly collected data on autocratic elections and in depth comparative case studies of the two central asian republics of kazakhstan and kyrgyzstan

manuel pereira da ponte martins beloved dictator of the state of teresina in brazil develops agoraphobia the day a fortune teller predicts he will die being torn limb

from limb by an angry mob his life becomes unbearable and he decides to hire a double to stand in while he set off to enjoy himself in the fleshpots of europe a few years later the barber turned dictator also grows tired of running the country and employs the same trick as his predecessor to leave for hollywood on the boat there he introduces himself as charlie chaplin but everyone is convinced that he is none other than rudolph valentino disguised as chaplin when he arrives in new york both the real actors are waiting for him back in teresina the doubles follow one another fooling the people with ease when pereira comes back he is astonished to discover that his stand in doesn t look anything like him and reacts in a way that can only precipitate his meeting with fate

in these elegant essays many of them originally written for the new republic and harper's robert boyers examines the role of the political imagination in shaping the works of such important contemporary writers as w g sebald and philip roth nadine gordimer and mario vargas llosa natalia ginzburg and pat barker j m coetzee and john updike v s naipaul and anita desai occasionally he finds that politics actually figures very little in works that only pretend to be interested in politics elsewhere he discovers that certain writers are not equal to the political issues they take on or that their work is fatally compromised by complacency or wishful thinking in the main though boyers writes as a lover of great literature who wishes to understand how the best writers do justice to their own political obsessions without suggesting that everything is reducible to politics resisting the notion that novels can be effectively translated into ideas or positions he resists as well the notion that art and politics must be held apart lest works of fiction somehow be contaminated by their association with real life or public issues the essays offer a combination of close reading argument and assessment what boyers asks is the relationship between form and substance in a work whose formal properties are particularly striking is it reasonable to think of a particular writer as reactionary merely because he presents an unflattering portrait of revolutionary activists or because he is less than optimistic about the future of newly independent societies what is the status of private life in works set in politically tumultuous times can the novelist be responsible if he consistently refuses to engage the conditions that affect even the intimate lives of his characters such questions inform these essays which strive to be true to the essential spirit of the works they discuss and to interrogate as sympathetically as possible the imagination of writers who negotiate the unstable relationships between society and the individual art and

reproduction of the original the dictator by justin mccarthy

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