

Chapter 1 : Alma Guillermoprieto - Identity Theory

In a young dancer named Alma Guillermoprieto left New York to take a job teaching at Cuba's National School of Dance. For six months, she worked in mirrorless studios (it was considered more revolutionary); her poorly trained but ardent students worked without them but dreamt of greatness.

Jan 06, Pickle Farmer rated it really liked it I really enjoyed this book. It was given to my sister by her friend in Oakland. A lot of this book hit close to home for me. Even the section where she contemplates suicide is charming. I guess I liked her narrator because she reminded me a lot of myself, haha. I am definitely going to try to track down more of her work to read. She parses the history of Cuba and the revolution in appropriate places to bolster the narrative. More than 3 decades ago, I spent 6 months teaching modern dance in Cuba. Merce Cunningham - elegant, alert and unfailingly courteous. Instead he chose to pursue the meandering paths of abstraction, chance and Zen philosophy. Yet his avante-garde experiments never interfered with the technical perfection and extraordinary refinement of his choreography. In his own way, he was a classicist. We would go off to class in search of the miracle that would fulfill all our desires. Let me dance in your company. She was from Uruguay, penniless. Graciela lived through a series of agitated experiences that, since she was Graciela, went far beyond the mere problem of male-female relations and became philosophical inquiries, repostulations of the very nature of love that always left her drained and bewildered. My political attitude toward the world I lived in, if I had one at all, was, I believe, a mixture of sincere elements of antiauthoritarianism, anticlericalism, horror of torture, revulsion at social inequality, defense of animals, terror of any type of violence, and distrust of anything related to big business, especially advertising. To me, this was the attitude of a revolutionary, as I felt I was in art. But my deepest conviction, so deep I would never have been able to articulate it, was perfectly elitist: I had no doubt that we artists were the highest form of human life. That conviction justified my existence. It had never occurred to me that I had a moral obligation to protest against injustice. Cuba would be able to finance its own development and free itself from what was becoming an alarming dependence on Soviet aid. Fidel was to announce this great victory on July 26, , the 17th anniversary of the Revolution Martha: From the vagina, girls! Movement is born in the gut! So there must be varying approaches to the leg warm-ups And both are music played by blacks. This is a city that never loses its refinement. He shared with the majority of his compatriots an inexhaustible lewdness. I valued his work as a poet Adrian , and nothing seemed more manly to me at that point in my life than his peculiar lack of superficiality, conformism or duplicity. It make no sense to seek stillness in the middle of a Revolution. In the same newsreel: I had lived alongside Evil -- and in willful ignorance of it! It existed with my complicity and bloomed because I had allowed it to. Angel Castro was a gruff man without pretensions or refinements. The Castros worked hard. Angel was a determined poverty-stricken Spaniard who first came to the island in the s as a soldier with the Spanish royalist troops. A few years later he returned, seeking better fortune than that offered by life as a farmhand in his native Galicia. He rented some land in the province of Oriente, at the opposite end of the island from Havana, and began growing sugarcane. By renting and then buying, he became rich. When Fidel was born, about families, many of them Haitian, lent Don Angel their labor in exchange for a conuco, a plot of land on his ranch on which to grow their own sustenance. Nevertheless, the Galician was neither a man of leisure nor an oligarch. There were no luxuries on the finca, and the Castros worked hard. Angel married and had 2 kids with a country schoolteacher. As time went by, he fell in love with a laundress name Lina Ruz. From that love affair, 7 more children were born: Fidel was said to have a bad temper. Heir to a certain fortune, educated in the best schools of Santiago and Havana, tall and good-looking, the young Fidel was out of control and somewhat eccentric. Fidel transformed his affinity to violence into a fundamental ideological conviction: Why do we have to be given everything? Right now we should be exercising our right to creativity, maybe writing a play or rehearsing. Obviously, our inner resources are withering away. Few women had any influence, but Fidel owed those few a great deal. She acted as a messenger when the guerrillas were hiding in the Sierra Maestra. Celia rejoined him in the Sierra Maestra. Two year later, on 1 Jan , the rebel army under the command of Fidel, occupied the capital city. It was the greatest moment of euphoria in the

history of the Cuban Revolution. I returned obsessively to my eternal questions: Who could I be? But the margins for negotiation were narrow, for the truth is that at the very moment when Roque Dalton and his colleagues were debating the question of whether spilling their blood or sacrificing their calling was the best way of contributing to the Revolution, that same Revolution had already managed to dispense with them almost entirely. Labrie but not his great photographer partner It was fascinating and allowed us all to eng The Music Hall book group met last night with some discussion of Dancing With Cuba by Alma Guillermoprieto , but most of the meeting was a presentation and question-answer session with two remarkable men sharing their experiences of Cuba I am sorry to say I remember Mr. It was fascinating and allowed us all to engage more with the book, which was somewhat disappointing. Alma G wanted to be a dancer good enough to join one of the great companies of modern dance in NYC. Much of the book, including the entire long first chapter, is terribly dense and tedious unless you are well-versed and well-immersed in the world of dance. However, her reflections on these months in when she accepted a position to teach dance in the ENA in Cuba were worth the effort to read because of how much I gleaned about Cuba, her history leading up to that year, the realities of the Soviet influence and the disasters wrought by embargoes that plunge entire populations into poverty There is a lot of food for thought in the discussions about arts and intellectuals in the reality of a revolution, no matter how those people look upon the revolutionary process. I am so ready now to return to some fiction!! There are nice descriptions of the areas, events and people she knew. Writing books obviously is a better pursuit for this author rather than dancing. She lived among some interesting people and presents that in an interesting, not I would give this a 3. She lived among some interesting people and presents that in an interesting, not name dropping way.

Chapter 2 : Dancing With Cuba by Alma Guillermoprieto | LibraryThing

Alma Guillermoprieto gives us an intriguing memoir of a year teaching modern dance in the Cuban national school of dance in the early years of the Revolution. Her critical observations are offered from a posture of appreciation for the human undertaking of social revolution.

June 14, "I think that the temptation to feel that your entire life has been wasted must be very great for a lot of Cubans. She has been writing about Latin America for over 25 years, frequently for The New Yorker, for whom she is essentially Latin American correspondent, and also other English and Spanish publications. Her most recent book is Dancing with Cuba. She has received a number of fellowships, among them a Mac Arthur and a Nieman, and is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. For six months, she worked in mirrorless studios it was considered more revolutionary ; her poorly trained yet ardent students worked without them but dreamt of greatness and more. But I tried so hard! So I think I learned a lot, in the course of all that effort, and I observed a lot, and it may be that the text has some edge as a result. How did you come to write Dancing with Cuba? A lot of memoir writing has to do with growing old. Or on the other side of the hill towards being dead and what did I make of my life? Looking back and trying to make sense of what had landed me in this weird place, I really thought this was a sort of turning point. Maybe not the turning pointâ€”there are so many. But a big turning point. And then the more I walked and the more I thought about it, the more I realized that this was also a story. And that it had a beginning, middle, and an end. You mention in the acknowledgements that Robert Gottlieb encouraged you. The way you phrased it suggested that you were not inclined to write it. And that he goaded or prodded you. Not this specific story. But he had told me for a long time that I should write a memoir. Of course he is a big memoir fan. But for some reason he thought that it would be interesting to have me tellâ€”he basically thought of it as telling stories in my own voice. Even though he is not at the house that you publish out of? They are both Random House, so he has a rightâ€”when he left Knopf for the New Yorker it was understood that he could come in at any point and edit any book that he was interested in. He still writes a dance column for the New York Observer. And he wrote, just recently, this wonderfully concise little book about Balanchine. And you were encouraged to write this book in Spanish. In fact it drove him completely insaneâ€” RB: I was encouraged to write this in Spanish by my translator, Esther Allen. Who I think did an amazing job. Why did she want you to write in Spanish even though you are quite facile and competent in English? Because she is very committed to foreign literature and she feels very strongly that people should be writing in their own language and that English should not be such a dominant language. And she loves to translate. And so she hounded me for a few years. It was actually a few years between the time that I decided this would be a story and the time I actually sat down to write it. Has Dancing with Cuba been published outside the U. Only the Cubans who have lived there for the last forty-six years really know Cuba. It takes those forty-six years of endurance and subtle interpretation of the winds of change and also closeness to the gossip of the revolution, to have some sense of what is going on. Yeah, it has been published in Spanishâ€”in the language in which it was written. It amounted to a kind ofâ€”not a retranslation exactly, but by the time we finished editing the book in English there had been a lot of minor changes on every page that I had to go back and make sure appeared in the original Spanish. It was cleaning upâ€”collating. This is essentially a six-month period in your life. I really love the stance that you take in the book about memoirsâ€”you question the veracity of dialogues and the memories. On the one hand I made those dialogues up. Thirty years later I wrote down what people said. I am convinced of that, the memories are so vivid. When I went back to Cuba one time looking for some of my lead charactersâ€”and there is a character who plays a very significant roleâ€”whose memory was the most painful to me. One of the boy dancers. The allegedly gay one, yeah. And so, whose memory is reliable? Who is a reliable commentator? I think only the Cubans who have lived there for the last forty-six years really know Cuba. It takes those forty-six years of endurance and subtle interpretation of the winds of change and also closeness to the gossip of the revolution to have some sense of what is going on. I really want to read hers because to me that is an ideal position in that she lived through the revolution as a young as a revolutionary and then she left. And she

is recognizes that the Revolution is part of her Cubanness. I mean anything is valid that anybody writes. And I felt jealous and competitive both books came out at the same time. But I will read it. The Peter Pan stories are quite interesting. There has been a lot of writing about that. Those kids had a particular need to look back and look at the rupture, their own ruptures. There seems to be a disconnect between the cyclical and trendy fascination with Cuba and the fact that every body seems to have an opinion, many people have an opinion, which are heartfelt I guess, but also they are convinced that they haveâ€” AG: Not the least of those are the crazy Cuban exiles. Who think they know Cuba better than anyoneâ€”because they are Cuban. And of course they do know Cuba better than anyone else. They are the keepers of that memory. There are some middle class and even poor Cubans who are the keepers of that pre memory. But somehow bridging those two memories is very difficult. People who can bridge those two memories are all dying off. Because like Fidel they are getting quite old. So I am concerned; if I were an anthropologist and not a reporter I would do oral historiesâ€”like madâ€”of what it was to live the transition. From prerevolution to revolution. Yes, it was shocking. Well, were you shocked? What was his visibility in this country? I thought it was much higher than the attention given to his death. I really was shocked but what do I know? It was at the same time that Esther [Allen] had organized this weeklong event on foreign literature, and I am sure there was attention paid to it at that PEN event. You mean in Cuba? Sure and the rest of Latin America. Cubans officially paid no attention. But in countries that have a very, very strong literary traditionâ€”in Mexico and Peru, Colombia, Argentinaâ€”yeah his death was a significant event. He was a significant writer. He was sitting in the hotel lobby and it was almost papal in the way he was approached by others. His expression was so fierce but he was quite a joker. I guess what I mean by frivolity is thatâ€” RB: It was very distracting rather than conducive to something. And I think he considered it his languageâ€”which is a very Cuban thing to do, to confuse ornateness with language. He was a nice man. He was a serious intellectual and he was a deeply sad man. I think towards the end that he might have just wanted to outlive Fidel. It was like a bet. And he lost that bet. I take it for granted that someone is pouring out their deep, heartfelt, perhaps secret, things and then, for example, I think I know you better than I should have any right toâ€” AG: Why did I do this? If you have a story to tell, you tell it. And there is something compulsive about that. I just knew that this was a good story. Was there a choiceâ€”perhaps another story?

Chapter 3 : Dancing with Cuba : A Memoir of the Revolution by Alma Guillermoprieto (, Paperback) | eBay

About Dancing with Cuba. In a young dancer named Alma Guillermoprieto left New York to take a job teaching at Cuba's National School of Dance. For six months, she worked in mirrorless studios (it was considered more revolutionary); her poorly trained but ardent students worked without them but dreamt of greatness.

Chapter 4 : Dancing with Cuba : A Memoir of the Revolution

The momentous year in Cuba that transformed the author from dancer into one of the most charringly honest journalists at work today. In New York City at the end of the s, Mexican-born Guillermoprieto (The Heart That Bleeds, , etc.) was studying modern danceâ€”described in prose of revelatory fluidityâ€”with Martha Graham.

Chapter 5 : Project MUSE - Dancing with Cuba: A Memoir of the Revolution (review)

"[Dancing with Cuba] is a loose mix of half-memories, reporting and musings on the place and meaning of art The mix works for some of the same reasons Guillermoprieto had such difficulty in Cuba â€” the sophisticated, intelligent singularity of her voice, her insistence on recognizing life's grays and her sly wit."

Chapter 6 : Dancing with Cuba: A Memoir of the Revolution - Alma Guillermoprieto - Google Books

Alma Guillermoprieto writes frequently for The New Yorker (where the first chapter of this book appeared in) and the

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New York Review of Books. She is the author of Looking for History, The Heart That Bleeds, and Samba, and she was named a MacArthur Fellow in

Chapter 7 : La Habana en un espejo / Dancing with Cuba by Alma Guillermoprieto | www.nxgvision.com

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Chapter 9 : Dancing With Cuba by Alma Guillermoprieto: book review | Bookmarks Magazine

Journalist Guillermoprieto (Looking for History; The Heart That Bleeds; etc.) revisits the six months in she spent teaching modern dance in www.nxgvision.com the state-supported school where she finds.