



Biography

Alberto Manguel

Born in Buenos Aires in 1948, Manguel grew up in Tel-Aviv, where his father served as the first Argentinian ambassador to Israel. At the age of seven, when his family returned to Argentina, he became fluent in Spanish, his first languages being English and German (which he spoke with his governess). At sixteen years of age, while working at the Pygmalion bookshop in Buenos Aires, he was asked by the blind Jorge Luis Borges to read aloud to him at his home. For Manguel, the relationship was pivotal: he read to Borges from 1964 to 1968. At that time, he was attending the Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires, where he was inspired particularly by a teacher of literature whose subsequent collaboration with the military would provoke Manguel to write his first novel, *News From A Foreign Country Came*.

Manguel left Argentina for Europe before the horrors of the 'disappeared' began, and just after the events of May 1968. He credits Severo Sarduy, Hector Bianciotti, Julio Cortázar and



Geneviève Serreau with generously easing his transition into living abroad and living by words.

In the 1970s, Manguel lived a peripatetic life in France, England, Italy, and Tahiti, reviewing, translating, editing, and always reading. In 1980, Manguel and Gianni Guadalupi compiled *The Dictionary of Imaginary Places*, a comprehensive and celebratory catalogue of fantasy settings from world literature. The publication of the book marked the beginning of Manguel's long association with publisher/editor Louise Dennys. In 1983, Manguel edited the groundbreaking anthology *Black Water: The Book of Fantastic Literature*. Manguel moved to Toronto, Canada where he lived and raised his three children for almost twenty years.

He became a Canadian citizen and continues to identify his nationality as first and foremost Canadian. Manguel contributed regularly to Canadian newspapers and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, as well as to the Times Literary Supplement, the *New York Times* and the *Village Voice*, and the *Svenska Dagbladet*. In 1992, Manguel's novel, *News from a Foreign Country Came*, won the McKitterick Prize. He directed the Maclean Hunter Arts Journalism Program at the Banff Centre for the Arts for five years and was appointed Distinguished Visiting Writer in the Markin-Flanagan Program at the University of Calgary.



In 2000, Manguel purchased with his partner and renovated a medieval presbytery in the Poitou-Charentes region of France to house his 30 000 books. They left France for New York in 2015. He has received many prizes, was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship and honorary doctorates from the universities of Liège, in Belgium, Anglia Ruskin in Cambridge, UK, and York and Ottawa in Canada. He is a Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (France).