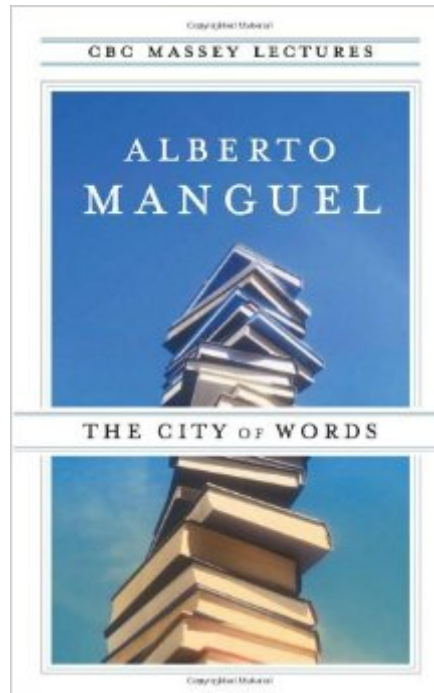


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The City Of Words (CBC Massey Lecture)



Synopsis

The end of ethnic nationalism — building societies that promote civic nationalism with universally accepted value systems — seems eminently sensible. But something is going wrong. In these 2007 Massey Lectures, Alberto Manguel takes a fresh look at the problems that come with creating new societies. Race riots in France, political murder in The Netherlands, bombings in Britain — all appear to be symptoms of a multicultural experiment gone awry. Politicians and sociologists are puzzled; why is it so hard for people to live together given the grim alternatives? Is blood still more important than peaceful coexistence? In *The City of Words* Manguel proposes a different approach: look at what writers have to say — maybe books and stories hold secret keys to the human heart, keys that social planners canâ™t find. With his trademark wit and erudition, Manguel suggests looking on the library shelf marked “fictionâ• for the book titled *How to Build a Better Society*.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I am reading this book for the second time: there was too much for me to consider and integrate on one reading. Alberto Manguel looks at the rise of violent intolerance in our societies. As part of this, he invites the reader to look at what is written (by visionaries, poets, novelists and essayists) and presented visually (by filmmakers) about the building of societies. Under the following chapter headings, we are invited to think about the future by drawing on the past to interpret the

present: `The Voice of Cassandra` `The Tablets of Gilgamesh` `The Bricks of Babel` `The Books of Don Quixote` `The Screen of Hal` Alberto Manguel invites the reader to consider a number of different and important questions: How does language itself determine, limit and enlarge our imagination of the world? How do the stories we tell help us perceive ourselves and others? Can such stories lend a whole society an identity, whether true or false? Is it possible for stories to change us and the world we live in? This is a book to keep and to refer back to. The prose is a joy to read for its own sake, the underlying messages are enduring and the questions are timeless. Jennifer Cameron-Smith

Thus far, every effort by Mr. Manguel I've read has proven interesting, well-written, provocative, insightful, and well worth the investment of time to do so. I highly recommend Mr. Manguel's work and encourage those who're curious about it, to delve and discover.

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