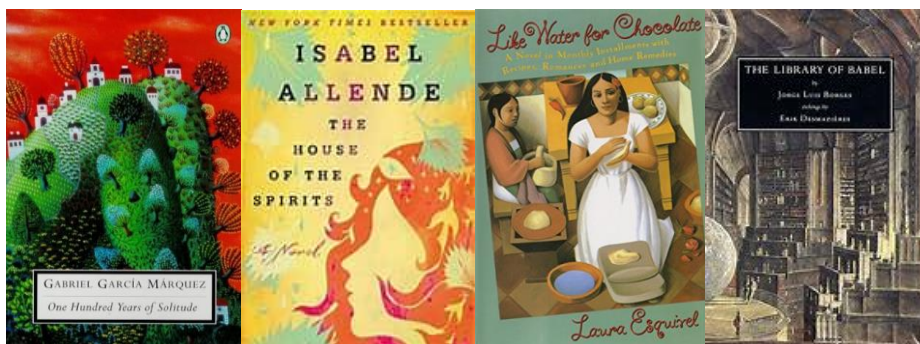




The WOA Book Club Reviews Latin American Literature

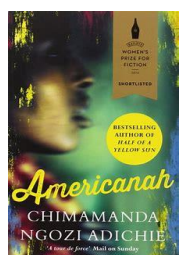


After touring West Africa, Greenland, the UK, France and Bhutan, the WOA Book Club set its sights on Latin America and the Caribbean. From the region's rich panoply of novels and short stories, we identified a list of classics for readers to choose from. The Book Club met on 28 November to discuss the selection.

We began by exploring *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez and *The House of the Spirits* by Isabel Allende. We pondered García Márquez's work, which evokes a sense of despair about society and its tendency towards violence and corruption, as an expression of collective trauma with the potential to offer relief to those familiar with such experiences. The beauty of the magical realism present in both works appealed to us all and we agreed that they express universal values whilst also presenting imagery that might be especially poignant for those who are connected to that culture.

The Book Club found *Like Water for Chocolate* by Laura Esquivel to be a beautiful, brutal, and accessible introduction to magical realism via the spicy recipes through which the stories of love and family are told. We also briefly reviewed the short story *The Library of Babel* by Jorge Luis Borges, about a labyrinthine library that holds all the books ever written, many filled with apparently meaningless type. We commented on the common usage of library imagery in literature to denote knowledge, civilisation, or even confusion, control, or corruption; indeed, one of our earlier books, *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig, presented a library as a life-changing place.

Finally, many members expressed their interest in further exploring the rich collection of Caribbean literature, much of which revolves around themes of post-colonialism, identity, and self, and which at times also incorporates magical elements.



The next Book Club choice is a story by world-renowned feminist author crossing Nigeria, the USA, and the UK: ***Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**. The next meeting will be in late spring (likely March 2023) with a virtual Zoom link to cover the different time zones.

For more information on how to join the WOA Book Club, please contact [Sonia Fèvre](#).

We would like to thank Sonia Fèvre, Ingrid Contreras, and Claire Cayol for submitting this article to the *In-house Times*.

