



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Department of French, Hispanic & Italian Studies

RMST 202

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Inventing
Romance Studies

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Inventing Romance Studies

with Jon Beasley-Murray

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Could we imagine a Romance Studies that
would be an intellectual project?

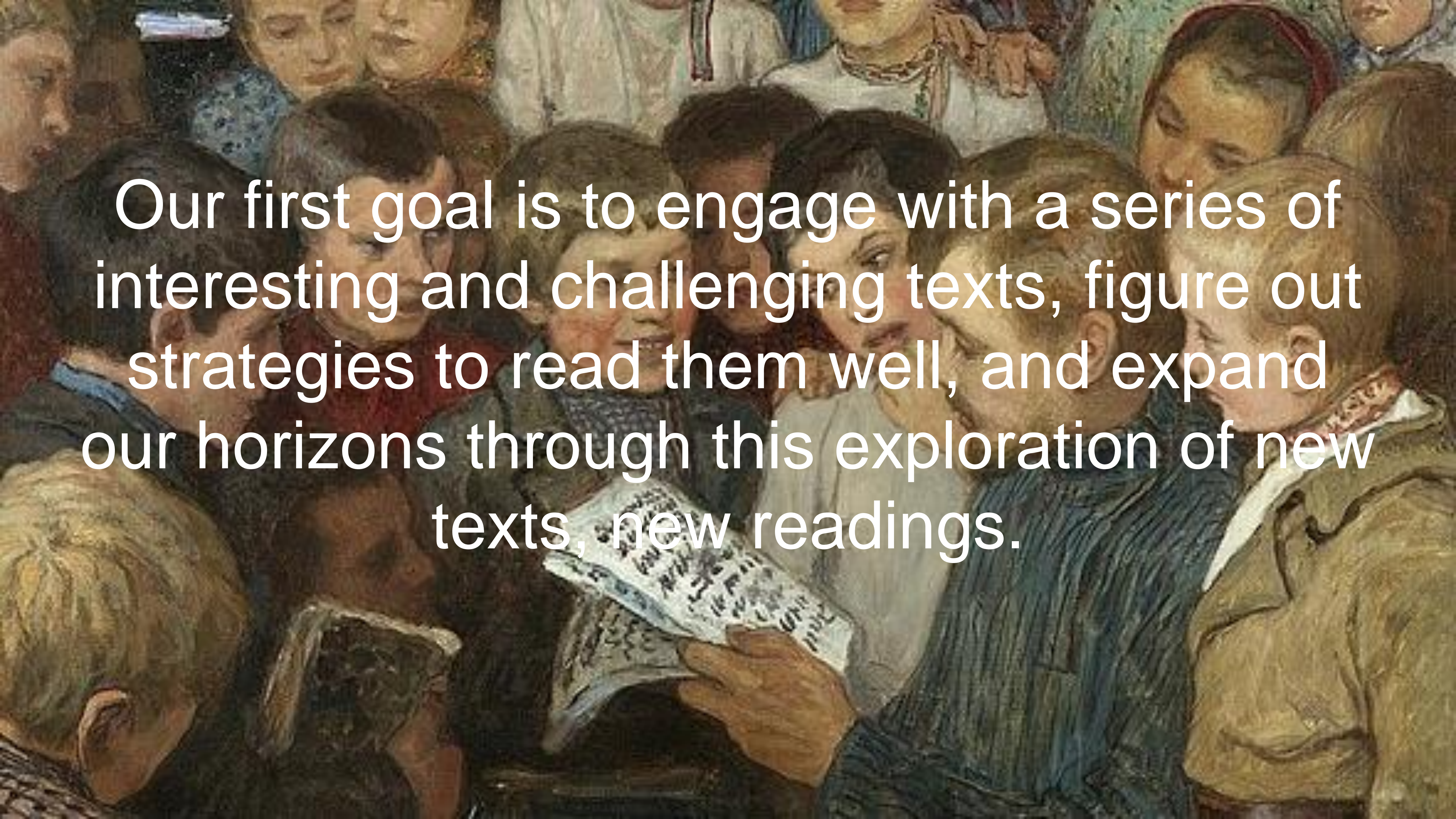
Could we imagine a Romance Studies that
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We still have to invent Romance Studies.

The point is not to construct a discipline like others, in their image, but to come up with something different and distinctive.

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What about a Romance Studies that leads the way, that offers a vision of a different future... a future of any kind at all?

A detailed painting of a diverse group of people, including men, women, and children of various ethnicities, gathered around a book. The central figure is a man in a blue striped shirt, who is holding the book open and looking at it intently. Other people are looking at the book or each other, suggesting a shared activity or discussion. The background is filled with more people, some looking towards the camera and others looking away. The overall tone is warm and focused.

Our first goal is to engage with a series of interesting and challenging texts, figure out strategies to read them well, and expand our horizons through this exploration of new texts, new readings.



IN SEARCH OF THE COMMONS

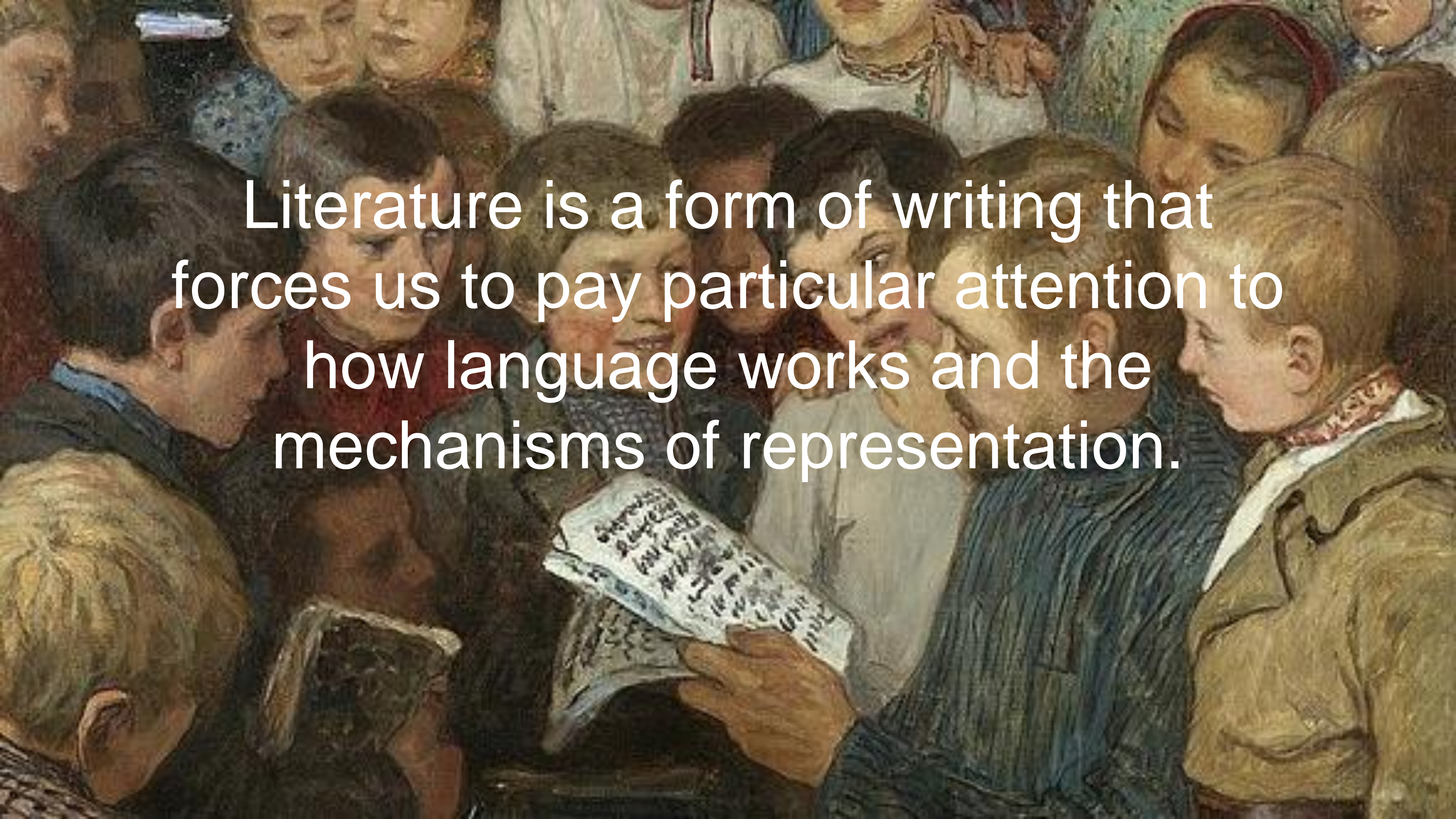
A detailed painting depicting a diverse group of people, including men, women, and children, gathered around a man in a blue striped shirt who is reading a newspaper. The scene is set in a crowded, possibly urban environment. The man reading the newspaper is the central figure, and his actions are the focus of the group's attention. The background is filled with other individuals, some looking towards the man with the newspaper, others looking away, creating a sense of a busy, communal space. The lighting is warm and focused on the central group, highlighting their faces and the newspaper. The overall mood is one of shared interest and community engagement.

Our second goal is to seek patterns of commonality and difference between our readings.

A detailed painting depicting a diverse group of people of various ethnicities and ages gathered around a book. The central figure is a man with a beard, wearing a blue striped shirt, who is holding an open book and looking at it intently. To his right, a young boy with light hair and a brown jacket is looking at the book. To the left, a man with dark hair and a blue shirt is also looking towards the book. In the background, several other people, including a woman with a red headscarf and a man with a white shirt, are looking on. The scene is set in a room with a wooden floor and a wall in the background. The overall tone is one of shared learning and cultural exchange.

Our second goal is to seek patterns
of commonality and difference
between our readings.

What, if anything, binds
these particular texts together?

A detailed painting depicting a group of people, likely in a public square or market, gathered around a man who is reading a newspaper. The man in the center, wearing a blue striped shirt, holds the newspaper open, and several others are looking at it with interest. The background shows a dense crowd of people in various attire, suggesting a busy, communal setting. The overall style is realistic with fine detail and a rich color palette.

Literature is a form of writing that forces us to pay particular attention to how language works and the mechanisms of representation.

Our third goal is to ask whether these texts have anything in common simply thanks to the fact that they share some common linguistic heritage?

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What is distinctive and different about “Romance Studies”?



**NO SUCH THING AS
A ROMANCE WORLD**

Where is the “Romance World”?

A close-up photograph of a glass of Inca Kola and a can of Inca Kola. The glass is filled with a golden-yellow beverage and ice cubes. The can is gold with a blue label that reads "INCA KOLA" and "The Golden Kola". The background is blurred, showing a person in a dark jacket.

Where is the “Romance World”?

There is no Romance World...

There is no Romance World...

and that is a good thing, too.

Nobody has bothered imagining
a Romance World.

Nobody has bothered imagining
a Romance World.

It scarcely rises to the level of fiction.

Romance Studies is tied to no territory.

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It is deterritorialized.


Romance Studies belongs nowhere, and it finds a place everywhere. This enables a democratic freedom of expression.

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Nobody can speak for Romance Studies or can claim to be closer to its source.

Here we are all strangers.

What the Romance languages share
is miscegenation.

A dramatic painting depicting a battle scene. In the background, a large classical building with columns is engulfed in flames, with thick smoke rising. The foreground is filled with soldiers in various armor, some on horseback, engaged in combat. The overall color palette is dominated by warm, fiery tones of orange, red, and yellow, contrasting with the dark, smoky atmosphere. The style is reminiscent of 19th-century historical painting.

What the Romance languages share
is miscegenation.

They are Latin's unwanted and uncontrolled
spawn, the product of counter-Empire, the
consequence of imperial decay.



A BASTARD (ANTI-)DISCIPLINE

Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian, and so on are *not* Latin: they are mutants that have diverged from any source, escaped from any orbit, sufficiently to gain their own names and identities.

The Romance languages are Latin's bastard offspring, forged in the encounter with the Barbarian hordes that destroyed Rome and its so-called civilization.

Romance Studies has no *pater familias*,
no father figures other than those
it turns against and betrays.

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no father figures other than those
it turns against and betrays.

This is a mongrel (anti-)discipline, born at
the point that authority is overthrown,
filiation denied.

Translation is a good image for what we are up to: remaking language, taking texts out of context, helping them travel.

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Nobody speaks “Romance.” But we all effortlessly speak “not-Latin.”

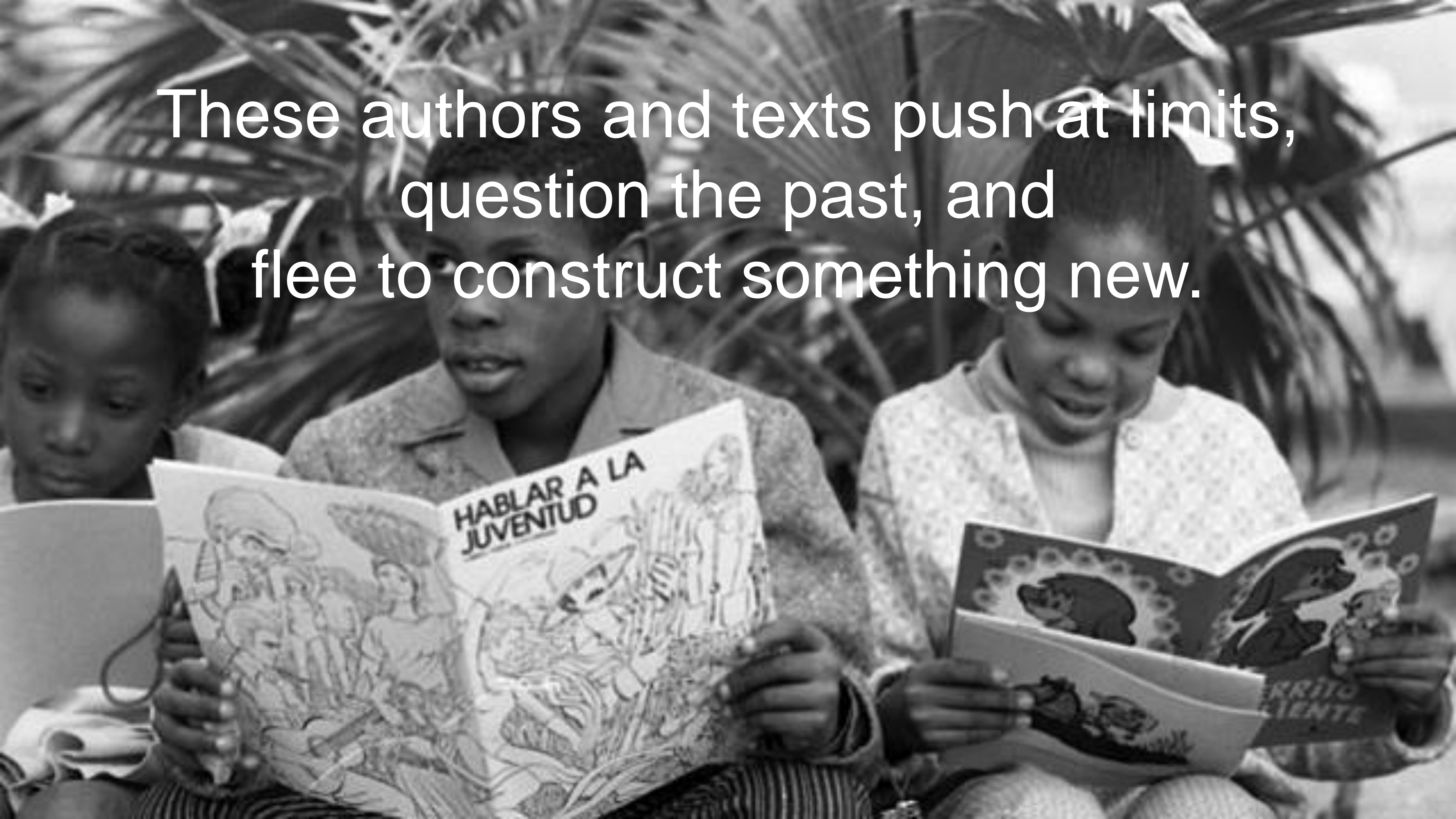
The project is to read, to think, to come up with new concepts, to open up horizons.

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Why follow a program, when we could be inventing ways to escape it?

Betrayal and escape, miscegenation and becoming, translation and misunderstanding, error and doubt, are at the core of many of the texts we are studying.

These authors and texts push at limits,
question the past, and
flee to construct something new.



A black and white photograph of three young boys sitting on the ground, reading newspapers. The boy in the center is looking towards the camera, while the other two are looking down at their papers. The newspapers have Spanish text on them, including 'HABLAR A LA JUVENTUD' and 'FRATRO ALIENATO'. The background is filled with palm fronds, suggesting an outdoor setting.


These authors and texts push at limits,
question the past, and
flee to construct something new.

They make us think differently about
representation and power, writing and the
real, authority and authorship.



MUSIC

Pianochocolate,
“Romance”



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