



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

RMST 202

Romance Studies,
Modernism to the Present

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Inventing Romance Studies

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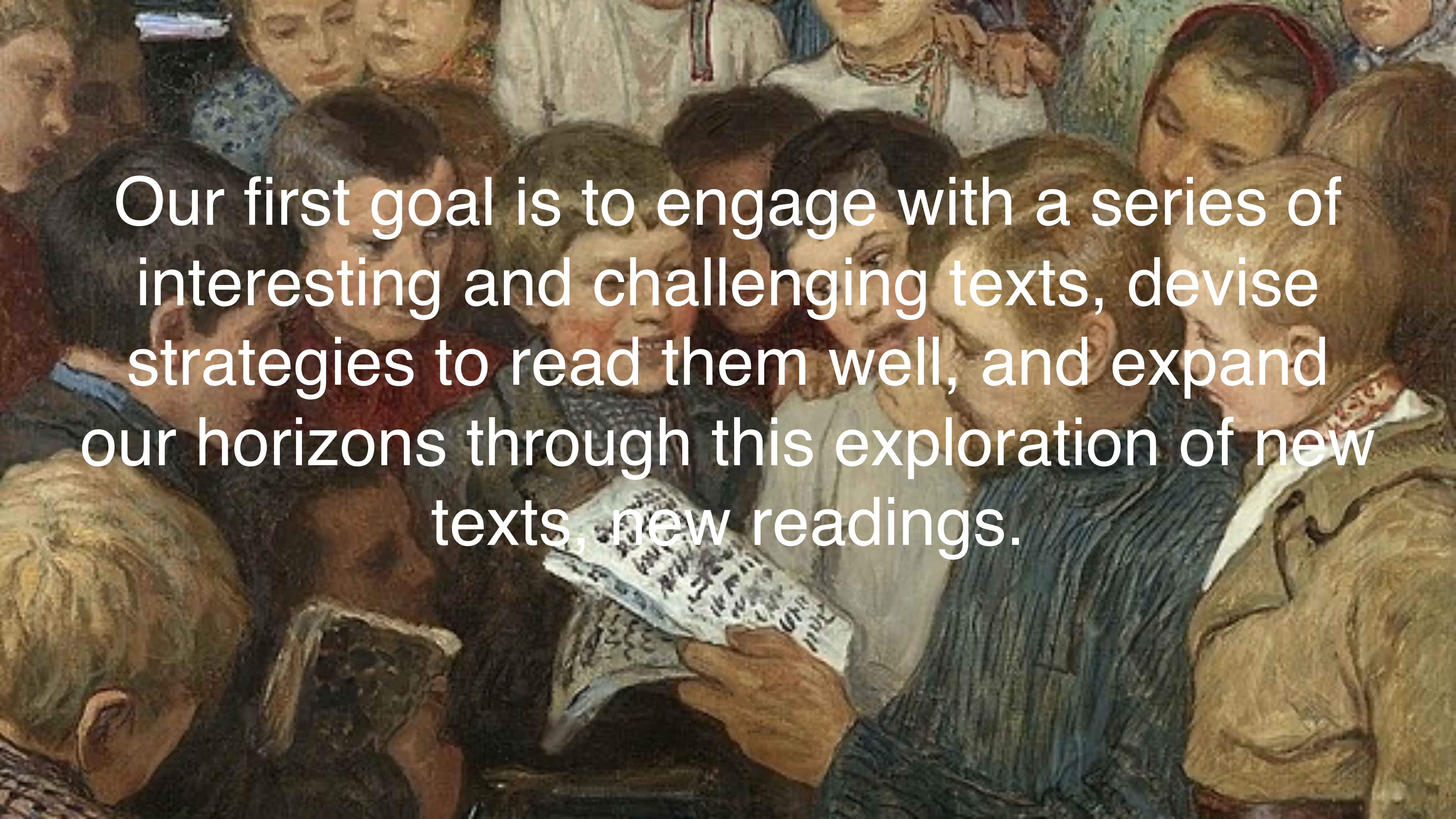
Romance Studies,
Modernism to the Present

Inventing Romance Studies

with Jon Beasley-Murray

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A detailed painting depicting a diverse group of people, including men, women, and children, gathered around a man who is reading a newspaper. The man is wearing a blue striped shirt and is holding the newspaper open. The people around him are looking at the newspaper with various expressions of interest and engagement. The background is filled with more people, suggesting a public space like a market or a community center. The overall scene conveys a sense of shared learning and community.

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

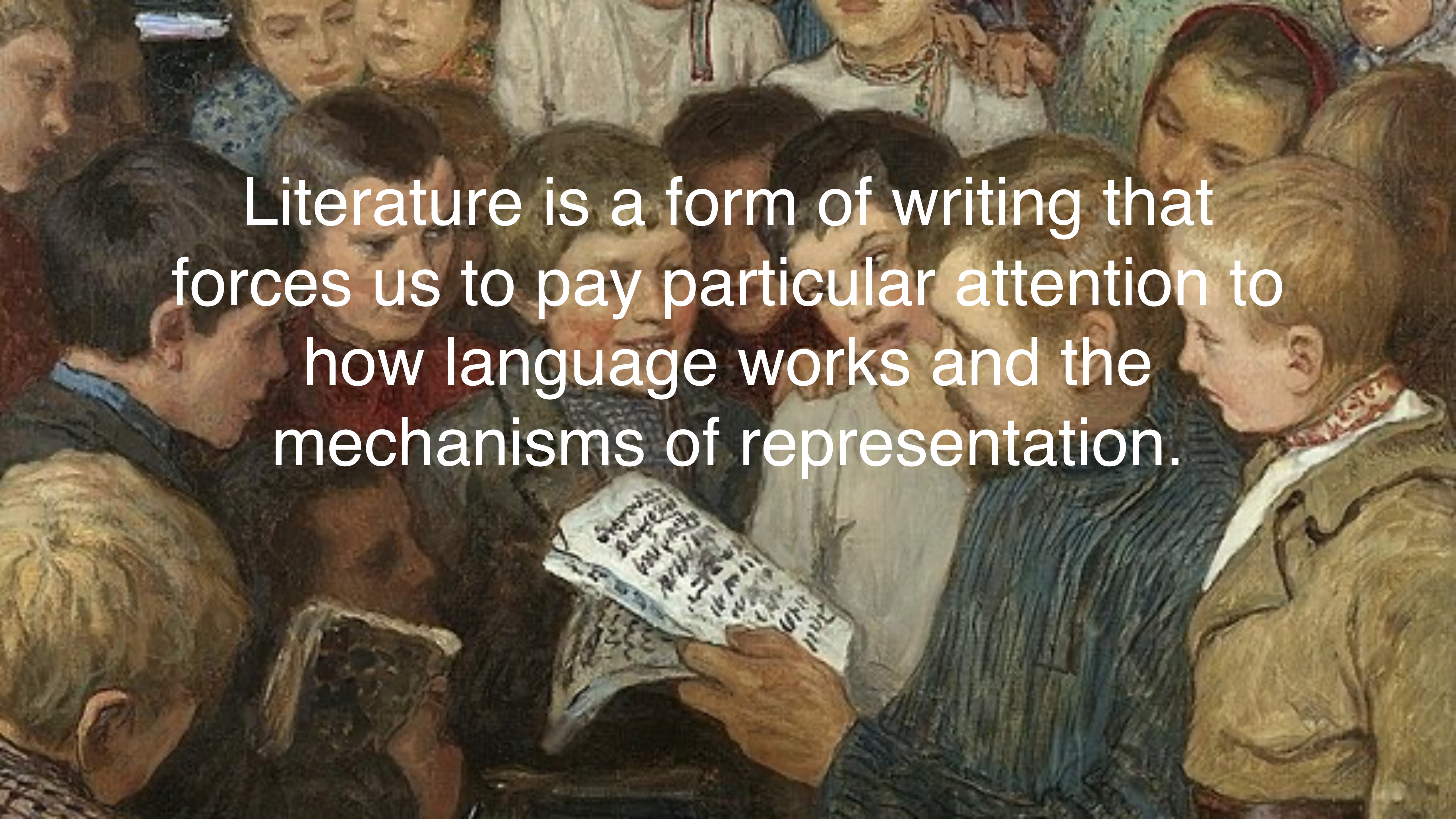


IN SEARCH OF THE COMMONS

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

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What, if anything, binds these particular texts together?

A detailed painting depicting a group of people, including men, women, and children, gathered around a man who is reading a book. The man is wearing a blue striped shirt and is holding the book open. The people around him are looking at the book with interest and attention. The scene is set in a room with a wooden floor and a wall in the background. The overall tone is warm and focused on the act of reading and learning.

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”?



WHERE IN THE WORLD?

Where is the “Romance World”?

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 bright orange and yellow flames. The foreground is filled with soldiers in various armor, some on horseback, engaged in combat. The overall atmosphere is one of chaos and destruction, with a dark, smoky sky. The text is overlaid in white, sans-serif font.

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 painting depicting a chaotic battle scene. In the foreground, a dense crowd of soldiers is engaged in combat. Some are wearing helmets and armor, while others are in more primitive or tribal attire. The soldiers are holding spears, shields, and swords. In the background, a large, classical-style building with columns and a pediment is visible. The scene is filled with smoke and fire, suggesting a fierce and destructive battle. The overall color palette is dominated by warm tones like orange, yellow, and red, contrasting with the cooler blues and greys of the building and the sky.

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.”

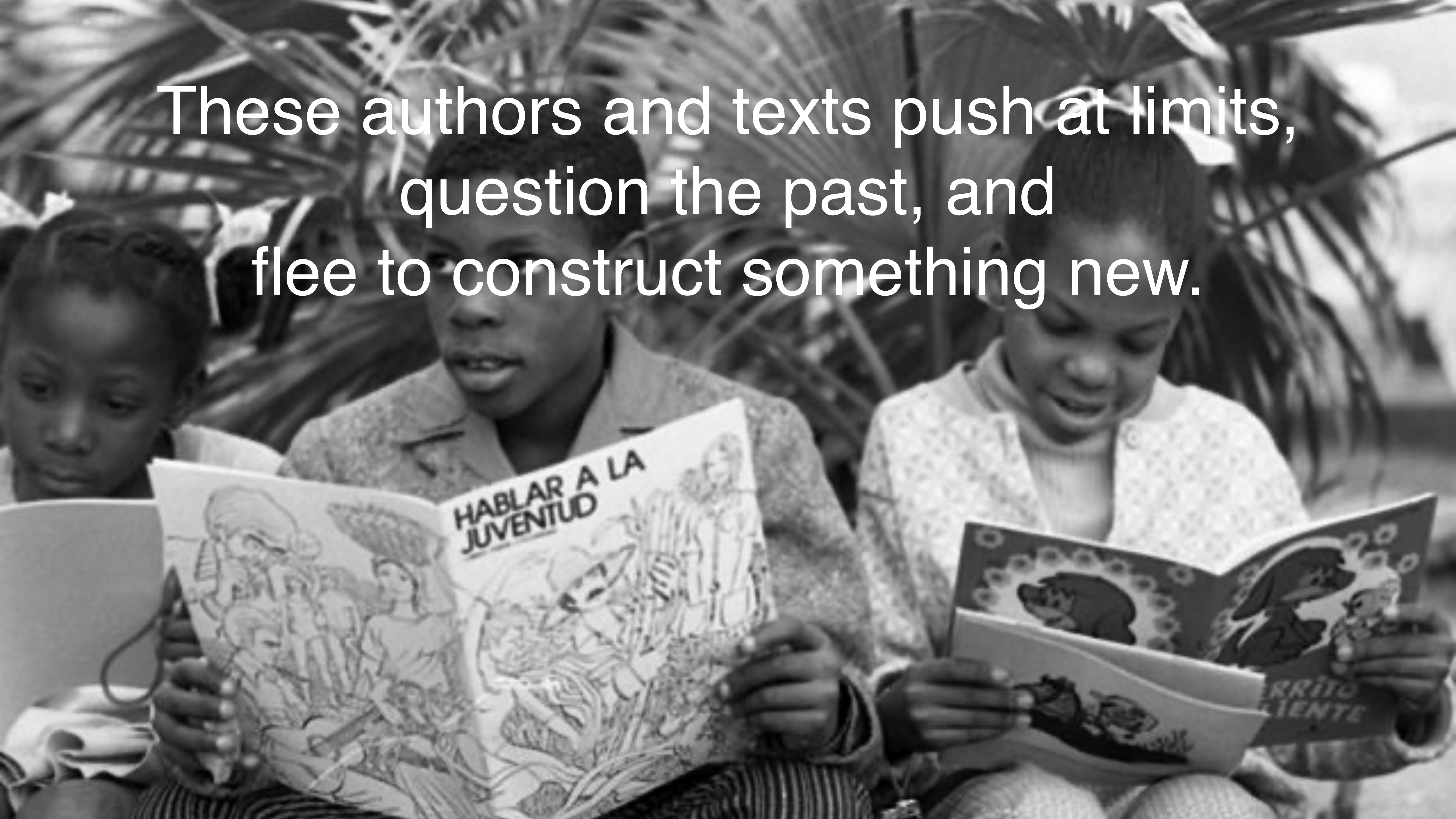
The project is to read, to think, to come up with new concepts, to open up horizons.

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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 floor, reading books. The boy in the center is looking towards the camera, while the other two are looking down at their books. The background is filled with palm fronds, suggesting an outdoor setting. The text is overlaid in white on the image.


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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PRODUCTION

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