but parallels and similarities which are the concern of analogy. The use of analogy can respect the many differences between literary traditions—differences Brooks discounts—and concern itself with the same images of human problems on a more sharply defined level than Brooks offers, a level where differences of language and literary tradition are acknowledged and their contribution to an author's statement of human problems confronted directly.

I do not differ greatly from Brooks in my hope for courses that respond to the problems literature describes. But I do feel that some attention must be directed to the particular author's medium (his linguistic and literary tradition) in order to understand what has influenced his position. Without respect for Romania and the other cultural circles that influence human expression, little contribution can be made to the teaching of literature as an understanding of "the confrontation of the mind and the surrounding world that is not mind" Brooks seeks. To return to the semipolitical metaphor of my first paragraph, I see neither a Romance Language Empire nor an English Department Commonwealth but a United Nations of all the Language Departments with the divergent traditions and assumptions they represent.

MICHAEL E. MORIARTY
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To the Editor:

I wish to comment on "Romania and the Widening Gyre" by Peter Brooks (87, Jan. 1972, 7–11). Mr. Brooks is insufficiently aware of his own assumptions. E. R. Curtius, on the other hand, was alert to his cultural loyalties and the limitations of the method those loyalties had left him as an inheritance. Although the arrangement of his work acknowledges chronology and geography, he cultivated no mystique about origins. He sought no ultimate solution to the mystery of human creativity. Since the dominant tradition of Western literature was rhetorical, he laid out a rhetorical panorama of the literature and the theory which had largely determined its styles and forms.

But there is also a value in the kind of book Curtius wrote for those writers and teachers who imagine that they have broken with the traditions of Latin Europe. We are still faced with the problem of teaching literature, of talking about it with one another. Although it is impossible to teach literature directly, we continue to exchange rhetoric about it because occasionally something important does seem to happen. Illumination occurs within a continued dialectic of rhetoric. That is just what Curtius illustrated over and over again. There is no other method available.

If Brooks wishes to teach literature as an institution of fiction-making, of "mime, model-building, play, dreaming" (p. 8), he will soon find himself dealing comparatively with models going back to Thomas More's Romania and the story of Eden. In other words, he will have to be something of a Curtius. One hopes he will be as clearheaded as Curtius was about where his values are taking the discussion. There is room for doubt on that score. Brooks is naïve about the open-endedness of teaching literature as play, of looking at literary works as dream-worlds. He must have noticed sometime that one man's dream is another's nightmare. If that is in fact the point of his institution it is a point my students have already learned.

The thematic arrangement of a course or of an anthology does not deliver the teacher from his own dogmatism. Rather, it leaves him more vulnerable to it. The best a teacher can do is to allow his own first principles to be challenged by human precedent, by comparison and analogy, by the arts of persuasion. At that point he is back in the tradition of Curtius.

The dissolution of a European literary tradition does not redefine the problems of reading, writing, and argument, whatever changes in pedagogy may be worth a try. Every private myth must yield to communal comparisons as soon as it is put into words. What modern romanticism needs is a Curtius who will describe the linguistic patterns that cut across autobiographical minutiae. Even half a Curtius would be welcome.

RICHARD HARRIER
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Mr. Brooks replies:

I am in some doubt as to the reality of any profound disagreement between Professor Moriarty and myself. I of course agree that literature is fabricated of language, and that any approach which neglects the specificity of a language, its conventions and possibilities, is utopian and falsifying. I argued that attention to "genius loci" and genius of the language is an irreducible necessity of any literary study. I believe, for instance, that the valid and necessary enterprise of teaching literature in translation is most effectively carried out by a teacher who knows the works in the original, and can convey a sense of the unavoidable displacements brought about by translation. As much as Professor Moriarty, I deplore the course which makes of Western literature a timeless and placeless spiritual cocktail party.

Since I was quite explicit on this subject in my article, I do not see why I am charged with making literature an "abstract" domain of image-making. There is nothing abstract about image-making. Nor do I think