

To the Editor:

Michael McCanles' provocative article presents *Don Quixote* as a novel that "affirms literal-metaphorical dialectic through presenting a literal-metaphorical interchange" (p. 284) and that provides a diagrammatic illustration (p. 289) of the transmission thereof. I can only marvel at the wondrous simplicity of the pictorialization; the least of its omissions is the unnamed translator which certainly must have been employed by Cide Hamete Benengeli, the greatest being Cervantes himself, that same Saavedra who was known to Ruy Pérez de Viedma in the Algiers prison.

If one were to follow a vaguely linear metaphor rather than a concise quadrangular literality, this procedure would make quite evident the overwhelming multiplicity of literal-metaphorical decisions to be made by the reader, himself proved to be a fiction by Walter J. Ong, S.J. ("The Writer's Audience Is Always a Fiction," *PMLA*, 90, 1975, 9-21). From my own perspective, for example, I find that McCanles has joined forces with Cervantes and has thereby aggravated my intense inner debate as I struggle to separate first world, second world, and heterocosm, thus to escape Don Quijote's error. The list I present is by no means exhaustive, albeit exhausting:

1. Did Amadís, son of Perión, really live the exploits related by his unknown chronicler?
2. Who was Alonso Quesada (or Quijano), who may or may not have been descended in the male line from Alonso de Ayllón Gutierre de Quesada, resident of Alcázar de San Juan?
3. Did Don Quijote, the "mad" creation of whoever this Alonso may have been, really live the exploits related by his biographer? Did Dulcinea del Toboso read of them as did the Duke and Duchess?
4. When did Cide Hamete Benengeli, characterized as a lying Arab, stretch the truth? Or was he really a Christian, as at times the history intimates?
5. Was Cervantes' wheat- and raisin-paid translator faithful to his task? (Has the humanist-guide included this in his *Suplemento a Virgilio Polidoro* as the invention of Raisin Bran?)
6. How much editing did Cervantes do? What errors did the printers make? What is the correct name for Sancho's *ofslo*?
7. Was Avellaneda the product of a collaboration between Lope de Vega and Guillén de Castro, as Margarita Smerdou Altolaquirre has stated in the *Estafeta Literaria* (550, 15 Oct. 1974, 8-12), or was he in his own right envious of Cervantes' fame?
8. If Avellaneda's *Quinta parte de sus aventuras* is apochryphal, how can he testify to the validity of the real Don Quijote? How does McCanles know that Don Alvaro Tarfe is spurious?
9. Are Don Quijote, Don Quixote, Don Quichotte,

Don Chisciotte, etc. all the same person?

10. Postulating that *PMLA* is as credible a source as is *Don Quijote*, who is the enigmatic "MMcC" on page 183 of Volume 91?

11. Is the Michael McCanles, purported author, the same as the Michael F. McCanles listed in *PMLA*, 90 (1975), 634, as well as "MMcC"? (Is the number in said listing, 53233, a metaphorical or literal interchange? A literal or metaphorical discourse?)

12. Is all of this to be construed to mean that a fictive approach to ontological decision-making is proved to be at least marginally valid in providing a reasoned construct of the first world, however metaphorical the interchanges, however literal the dialectics in the aforementioned heterocosm labeled *PMLA*?

ROBERT L. HATHAWAY
Colgate University

To the Editor:

Michael McCanles' article indeed provides "the kind of intellectual excitement that *PMLA* is attempting to generate" ("Editor's Column," p. 180). McCanles, though, seems to be somewhat mistaken or confused in several of his comments on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He states that Bottom is a literalist unable "to grasp the metaphorical nature of plays and their presentation" (p. 283), and certainly he is. McCanles, however, continues: "His various projected prologues explaining moonshine and the lion presuppose . . . that his audience will be as literal-minded as he is and will require explanations that the lion is really an actor and that the ludicrous figure representing moonshine does in fact so represent it" (p. 283). Bottom is the first to suggest a prologue to explain the things in the play that he fears will not please the audience. But his suggestion is for a prologue to explain that the swords will do no harm and that Pyramus will not be killed. Snout is the first to mention the lion and the one who suggests the prologue to say that the lion isn't a lion. Bottom then elaborates, but the credit for this prologue should go to Snout. Quince introduces the problem of moonshine, and Bottom, literalist that he is, says that he can leave the casement of the chamber window open and let the moon shine in. Quince offers the alternative of having an actor appear with a bush of thorns and a lantern and tell the audience that he represents the moon. Actually, then, neither the prologue concerning the lion nor the prologue concerning moonshine is Bottom's idea.

McCanles' statement that the "moral" of the play "is that those who misunderstand poetic fictions are condemned to act out poetic fictions" (p. 284) also seems to be inaccurate or, at least, not supported by the facts of the play. Bottom, as McCanles main-