

A Word from Cervantes

There is none better than Miguel Cervantes to put all of this in the proper perspective.

Recall if you would, Dear Reader, the opening passage of Chapter 42 of Book II of Miguel de Cervantes's Classic *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, wherein the aristocratic Duke and Duchess continue to amuse themselves with their playthings, the deluded Don Quixote and his squire Sancho Panza, by pretending to allow the latter to govern one of their islands.

"The duke and duchess were so well pleased with the successful and droll result of the adventure of the Distressed One, that they resolved to carry on the joke, seeing what a fit subject they had to deal with for making it all pass for reality. So, having laid their plans and given instructions to their servants and vassals on how to behave to Sancho in his government of the promised island, the next day, that following Clavileno's flight, the duke told Sancho to prepare and get ready to go and be governor, for his islanders were already looking out for him as for the showers of May....

"'Recollect, Sancho,' said the duke, 'I cannot give a bit of heaven, no, not so much as the breadth of my nail, to anyone; rewards and favors of that sort are reserved for God alone. What I can give, I give you, and that is a real, genuine island, compact, well proportioned, and uncommonly fertile and fruitful, where, if you know how to use your opportunities, you may, with the help of the world's riches, gain those of heaven.'

"'Well then,' said Sancho, 'let the island come; and I'll try and be such a governor, that in spite of scoundrels, I'll go to heaven; and it's not from any craving to quit my own humble condition or better

myself, but from the desire I have to try what it tastes like to be a governor.... 'Señor,' said Sancho, 'it is my belief that it's a good thing to be in command, if it's only over a drove of cattle.'"

And now, Dear Reader, permit us to transport you from La Mancha in the 17th Century, to London in the 21st, on the occasion of Nov. 5, 2009 in which a modern Duke (that of Kent) bestowed upon a reincarnated Sancho (President Lula of Brazil) the prize, not of governing the Island of Barataria, but the equally impressive Chatham House Prize 2009 for Lula's "innovative and responsible economic policies that have maintained fiscal balance." And listen in with us, if you would, to the comments written for the occasion by Chatham House Associate Fellow (and leading British Brazilianologist) Prof. Victor Bulmer-Thomas:

"Brazil is now at the forefront of the key international issues of the day and much of the credit must go to the winner of this year's Chatham House Prize. The award of the 2016 Olympic Games to Rio de Janeiro is the icing on the cake.... [Brazil's] global leadership pretensions were of necessity postponed by a combination of inward-looking development, military government and hyper-inflation. It was only in the mid-1990s, when Brazil had finally tamed inflation, opened its economy and consolidated its democracy, that a global role could again be considered.

"Aspiration is one thing and achievement is another. Fighting for a place at the top table is not easy.... [Brazil] will work to free the world of nuclear weapons, it will be constructive on climate change negotiations....

"Like other aspirants, Brazil will not move to permanent status without serving a long apprenticeship in the rich country clubs."

The sorcerer's apprenticeship?