

Cultural Attaché's Address to the University on the 23rd Glorious National Day of Poundland

Dear students,

It is with great pleasure that I address you all on this glorious day in December, that most cherished month of the founding of our beloved country, Poundland, and of your own graduation. I stand both humbled and proud before you, the next generation of customers, on this most auspicious of occasions. May your future sprees be enriched by the Holy Rhino, and your souls blessed by Mammon himself.

In the interests of progress, I would like to take this opportunity to echo the words of our illustrious Chairman, Andrew: 'Now that "how much is this?" has become a question of the past, it falls to the citizenry of Poundland to extend universal equivalence to all precincts of life.'

As a superior and stable nation, cohered by our notable inability to enter a grotto of gaudy, card-backed goods and hold back from exclaiming 'I could really do with one of those', we have effected many parities across classes, ethnicities and pay scales. There is not a single Poundlander, for example, who is immune to the accusing glare of a cracked flowerpot or silted toothbrush holder, or who does not feel the ache of a remote control voided of batteries; and there are none who do not bath in the light of the Great Treasurer's paternal smile when they retrieve the situation by parting with a single pound. And there is no Poundlander alive or passed over who can perceive in a pack-of-two Little Miss ankle socks the hand of a single one of the far-flung millions of enthusiastic factory workers any more than they can identify an individual plankton in the smooth plastic of a nest of bootleg Tupperware pots.

Indeed, dear students, in Poundland we can sense time stretching before us, if not in the durability of objects, then at least in the persistence of the bright materials that go into a disposable poncho or a squeaky dog toy shaped like a chop, which extend as far into the future as they do back towards their black, fossilised origins. We know our place in history, and have a cupboard under the sink jam-full of Bloo, Cif, Cillit Bang, Duzzit, Essents, Harpic, Morning Fresh, Neutradol, Surf, Wizz Oxi and Zoflora with which to keep that place fresh-smelling and germ-free for the foreseeable.

But, without wishing to dampen what is always and forever a time of national pride and high-spirited celebration, as the cultural attaché it behoves me to appeal to the creativity of all upholders of universal equivalence. In the Department of Finance and Stationery the statute holds straight and true, for a strict fiscal policy has been implemented since the inception of this great nation state. But in the Ministry for Culture, Hobbies and DIY, universal equivalence is still in need of slathering with Beautifully Scrumptious Peach Body Scrub, winking out with a pair of unhelpfully soft allen keys and guiding home with a multi-pack of tea lights.

Do not misunderstand me, dear students. This is a great period in our history. That there is nothing so abstract that it cannot be sold is in itself a triumph of our abundant and just nation. But still we must fight all remaining disparities. We must rescue the finer arts from the exorbitant heights of the auction houses and concert halls, reinstalling them on the shop floor, open to all, 8:30am until 6:00pm (or ten 'til four on Sundays).

And so the great Poundland Cultural Revolution is upon us. It is time to draw on our resources with a ten pack of Washable Colour Markers. Let the tills ring out concrete poetry of tender poignancy; may points of sale display compositional boldness, and let the piped music herald the sundry angels of overwhelming choice.

Go forth, dear students, and take Poundland as your medium, your message and your mentor.

Arts for all, and all for a pound!

[See over for image...]

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Aviary, 2014

Award-winning literary vignette. Author unknown. This was smuggled out of Poundland in the leaves of a Tatty Teddy Sticker Activity Book to avoid the high import and export duties that have generated a cultural buffer around the nation state, and which explain why this genre is not more widely known. The title was handwritten on the back, possibly with Crayola Twistables.