

In "The Plastic Pink Flamingo: A Natural History," Jennifer Price describes the "splash" made by the pink flamingo upon its release. At first glance it appears to be nothing more than a simple essay on the history of the pink flamingo and why it may have been as successful as it was, but it is far more than that. Price uses puns and metaphors along with historical fact and quotes to allude to her view of the United States as having a wrongly class based and overly wealth obsessed culture.

Price begins the essay with a pun on the word "flock," which compares Americans visiting Florida and buying flamingo souvenirs, to birds flocking to food or water. She then goes on to say that the Flamingo, a very high class hotel in Florida, had made the bird synonymous with wealth. She uses both these pieces of evidence together so as not to directly say it but to allude to the fact that Americans follow wealth in the same way that birds might follow food. Price also talks about how the middle class, and later working class, was accommodated with many more modest hotels as they followed the rich to their vacation spot. By separating these three classes while talking about the history of the pink flamingo she shows how they were catered to in order of wealth and the bias that that is based on.

Next, Price uses the city of Las Vegas which started with the Flamingo Hotel to again show how the bird's connection to wealth and extravagance made people feel as though they "stand out" by association. She attributes the pink flamingo's success in New Jersey to its ability to make one "stand out" due to its association with Florida and thereby perceived meaning of wealth and extravagance. This language is used to show that people feel as though they need to have more money, or at least appear to, than those around them to be successful.

Price then focuses on the color pink as a symbol of the new generation leaving the depression, and by extension a lack of wealth, behind. She shows how many celebrities were embracing pink as they gained wealth which led to people of less wealth using the color in an attempt to appear more wealthy or more like the successful.

Price's essay on the history of the pink flamingo on careful inspection is not as simple as it seems. Throughout the elaborate use of metaphor and pun as well as the interwoven historical fact and quotes Price makes an argument that the United States is too focused on class and wealth.