

Critical review of the plastic pink flamingo: a natural history



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In Jennifer Price's essay, "The Plastic Pink Flamingo: A Natural History," she reveals her optimistic view of United States culture by comparing the characteristics of the iconic pink flamingo to the mindset of Americans with allusions to other cultures and descriptive diction.

Price's parallelism to the effects of the flamingo and mindset of America is clearly shown with cultural allusions. As Price reveals her hope and view that the generation is being reborn she alludes to the associations of the flamingo, "Early Christians associated it with the red phoenix." Jennifer Price includes this specific example to emphasize the relation between two birds—flamingo and phoenix. From her viewpoint the flamingo, which represents Americans, is being reborn out of the ashes, as the Phoenix is known for. The rising from the ashes refers her previous that the flamingo's life and color was "just right for a generation, raised in the Depression, that was ready to celebrate its new affluence." Price's cultural allusion to Mexico and the Caribbean that the flamingo "remains a major motif in art, dance, and literature," further emphasizes her view of the United States culture revolutionizing its education. Americans are understanding, exceeding, and developing their artistic talents, bringing to life a boldness that "the people who lived near these places have always singled out the flamingo as special." Surrounding countries and are taking notice of the unique qualities "flamingos" have to offer.

The synonymous diction and qualities of miscellaneous objects are manipulated by Price to hint at her mindset of American culture. Her humour is evident in her opening statement, "[The flamingo] staked two major claims to boldness. First it was a flamingo (italicized)." The choice of a flamingo was

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already bad to begin with. Price's repetition of the word "boldness" accompanied with "flamboyant," "extravagance," and "wealth and pizzazz" are timely placed for the reader to imply her views on the current culture. Price saw this as a gleeful, jubilant celebration for all citizens of America. Unlike the Gilded Age of America which provided glamour in order to mask corruption and scandal, the pink flamingo "splashed" into an "oasis of instant riches. The second bold claim, as Price describes, was the choice of color. Her rhetorical questioning in the last paragraph emphasizes the importance of choosing a color that "stands out in a desert even more strikingly than on a lawn." Price's hope of the bold revival can be inferred from her contrast that American culture is more extravagant because of the economic travesty it was in before. Price elaborates on her ideals with her specific adjectives to describe the boldness of pink. "Passion pink, sunset pink..." Price views the culture of the United States as one with the "passion" to overcome and the "sunset" that ends an "old-fashioned" era to begin "forward-looking" into the prospects of the future.

Price crafts her view of American culture with subtlety. Her casual tone when writing about the wonders of the Pink flamingo parallels to her view of a revolution in America. The turning point and beginning of an upward climb all condensed into the talks of a bold pink flamingo.