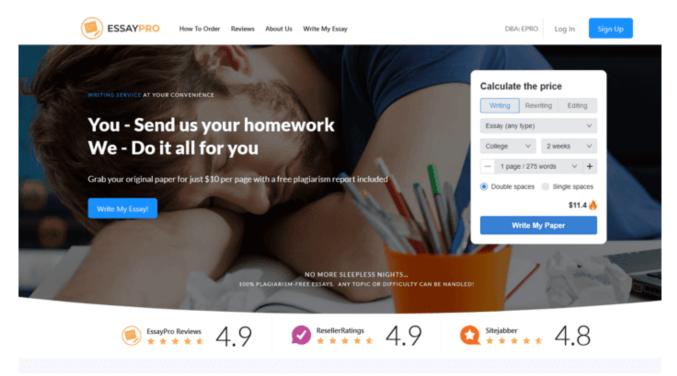
Susan Isaacs's Critique of Ntozake Shange's Sassafrass, Cypress, and Indigo



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an intriguing idea, but it fails because although the author tries to present Indigo as a wise innocent, a mystical power, a joyous embodiment of the black spirit, the rhetoric of her <u>musings</u> is earthbound radical-feminist, predictable and silly..."

Isaacs continues her criticism of the notion that Indigo has any magical abilities, and the use of magic as a story line and as a part of Indigo's character, saying, "And if Indigo's black magic is real,...How can she and her people-a people with such potent magic-tolerate the evils the author catalogues so movingly?" (396). Isaacs wonders about the reason for Indigo's magical, mystical qualities, and continues along this track, wondering if the magic might be a metaphor, a fantasy of Indigo's, or Shange's own portrayal of black folklore. Regardless of the intended portrayal of Indigo's magical qualities, Isaacs believes that, "it is not presented with enough clarity. The reader remains mildly fond of Indigo--people who talk to dolls can be enchanting--but it is nonetheless befuddled about her role in the novel" (394).

Despite Isaacs' problems with the structure of the novel, and some of the devices and techniques Shange used in her character development, she does praise Shange as a novelist, comparing her art to weaving, a skill shared by both the mother and the eldest daughter in Sassafrass, Cypress, and Indigo.

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