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A Comparative Study of Alice Walker's The Color Purple (1982)
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Dedication

To my family, thank you for always being there for me.

To my parents, your love, support, and sacrifices mean everything to me.

To my siblings: Khaled and Rafik ; you give me strength and joy every day.

To my friend Tina, thank you for your help, kindness, and encouragement during this journey.

This work is for all of you. I could not have done it without you.

Lydia.

To my beloved parents, whose love and strength guide me always.

To my brothers Cherif and Mouloud, for being my pillars.

To my best friends Yasmine, Lamia, Rania, and my dear friend Farid, for their light and laughter.

To my aunt Fatiha and her husband, for their kindness and support.

To my entire family, for their love and prayers.

This achievement is yours as much as mine.

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Abstract

This master dissertation examines *The Color Purple* (1982) by Alice Walker and its 2023 film adaptation through the lens of the transmedial theory. The purpose of this study is to compare how the themes of education, marriage, and religion are represented across the two different media, and how these representations influence the audience's understanding of the protagonist's personal growth and self-realization. The Transmedial theory, first introduced by Henry Jenkins, focuses on how narratives adapt and transform across different media forms, providing a suitable framework for analyzing what is retained, altered, or lost in the shift from novel to film. The first chapter of our discussion outlines the core concepts of transmedial storytelling, which serve as the basis for the analysis. We argue that while both the novel and the film trace Celie's journey toward empowerment, the medium through which her story is conveyed plays a crucial role in how key themes are developed and interpreted. For instance, in the novel, Celie's inner transformation is deeply connected to her letter writing, whereas the film relies on visual storytelling, music, and performance to express her emotional evolution. The analysis reveals that education, marriage, and religion play a decisive role in shaping Celie's identity and her gradual transformation, as each theme undergoes a significant evolution throughout her journey. The findings show that applying a transmedial perspective deepens the understanding of how different narrative forms influence meaning, emotional impact, and the way audiences perceive Celie's growth.

Key words: *The Color Purple*, Alice Walker, 2023 film adaptation, Transmedial theory, Visual storytelling.

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I. General Introduction

Throughout history, the term ‘literature’ has held diverse definitions and meanings, varying across different periods. It includes both fiction (novels, short stories) and non-fiction (essays, pamphlets, plays and playsçi) that serve as a medium for exploring the human condition, reflecting the changing social, cultural, political, and intellectual landscapes in which it is produced. Literature is also sometimes referred to as ‘Belles Lettres’, to highlight the artistic qualities of language and fine writing rather than focusing primarily on contextual analysis. Literature encompasses different forms of creative expression that utilizes language, oral, written and visual to communicate ideas, emotions, experiences, and perspectives. Literature has evolved from epic poems of ancient civilization passed down through oral tradition, novels, short stories, and dramatic works intended for performance. This broad definition of literature allows for an exploration of its diverse forms and its evolution across different societies and historical periods.

Today, African American literature is a foundational element of American literature. In the South, black people were victims of discriminatory treatment and were denied the full rights enjoyed by white citizens. In response to these experiences, many black writers used their literary talent to reflect on their lives and the harsh realities they faced. This artistic expression resulted in a significant body of works, including poetry and slave narratives.

Moreover, the last three decades of the twentieth century witnessed the emergence of some women writers such as Zohra Neale Hurston, Gail Jones, Toni Morrison, Terry McMillan, Gloria Naylor, and Alice Walker, who are examples of successful women novelists who have become prominent figures in the publishing world.

This study aims to provide a comparative study of Alice Walker’s novel *The Color Purple* 1982 and its film adaptation 2023. To be more explicit, the present research paper

aims to deal with the themes of education, marriage, and religion in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982) and its main film adaptation of 2023 by Blitz Bazawule. Alice Walker's works are known for their portrayal of black women's lives in America. She deals with violence, racism and rape. In her novel *The Color Purple*, she portrays the tragic experiences of African-American women and their struggle for survival and wholeness. She depicts their lives in rural Georgia, USA, in the early twentieth century, demonstrating the role of education and marriage, and the importance of religion through her female characters.

On the other hand, *The Color Purple* is a 2023 American musical film directed by Blitz Bazawule. It is an adaptation of the same name, which premiered in 2005. The musical itself was based on Alice Walker's 1982 novel. This marks the second film adaptation of the novel, following the 1985 film of the same name directed by Steven Spielberg. He serves as one of the producers for this new version, with Quincy and Oprah Winfrey.

Review of the Literature

Both Alice Walker's novel and its film adaptation have been subject to a wide range of criticism. First, concerning the novel, the African-American literary critic Harold Bloom states in *Bloom's Modern Critical Views: Alice Walker-New Edition* (2007) that Alice Walker is a wholly representative writer who reflects her era, and that the success of *The Color Purple* is well deserved. For him, Alice Walker, as a contemporary writer, is right when she refers to herself as "author and medium", which Bloom finds, "idiosyncratic". Her literary work *The Color Purple*, he adds, is very close to the spirit of the age.

Besides, her book *In Search Of Our Mothers' Garden: Womanist Prose* (1986) which includes essays on the New York Times, sexism, racism, and black woman writers (1986) Mel Watkins praised Walker's skillful writing and her portrayal of the challenges faced by black women struggling for independence in the face of male domination, as she stated "the role of

male domination of the black woman's struggle for independence was clearly the focus of what was a striking and consummately written novel''.(1986, p.7.)

Additionally, Louis H. Pratt analyzes the positive and the negative image of black men in *The Color Purple*, in the article : *Alice Walker's Men : Profiles in Quest for Love and Personal Values (1989)*. He states that many literary critics have perceived Alice Walker's work with skepticism. These interpretations, in his view, suddenly became muted in 1983 by the publication of *The Color Purple*. He explores her attempt to expose the relationship between men and women and argues that Alice Walker's negative representation of men continues to emerge. Her anger, he interprets, of the injustices of men led her to create in her novel an artistic stance which is basically critical of men. According to his words, "men in the novel are miserable because of the lack of love in their lives, which leads them to treat women purely sexual." Pratt, on the other hand, treats the positive images of men in the novel and depicts Samuel as the peripheral male character in the novel for his compassion and kindness while adopting Celie's children. He goes on and argues that this tranquil man has traditional values that transformed him into a sensitive and compassionate individual who has a deep interest in the family and pride in blackness.

As far as the 2023 Film Adaptation of *The Color Purple* is concerned, only very few academic studies are available. Many well-known magazines have also praised the film's use of music.(AP News,2023) described *The Color Purple* as "a moving musical with an amazing cast," pointing out the strong overall performance.(Vanity Fair,2023) called the film "a strong song-delivery system," showing how the cast used their voices to tell the story.(Time Magazine,2023) added that the movie is "a celebration of Black identity," meaning the musical style plays an important role in showing African American culture and experience.

In contrast, Entertainment Weekly provides a more balanced perspective, appreciating the actors' performances while critiquing the film's musical execution and tonal inconsistency. The review by Maureen Lee Lenker (2023) commends Barrino's singing abilities and Brooks's emotionally layered performance. However, it argues that the musical numbers often fall flat and that the transition between serious drama and joyful spectacle sometimes feels abrupt. Moreover, the article suggests that the adaptation struggles to harmonize its heavier themes, such as trauma and abuse, with the uplifting tone expected from a Broadway-style musical. Consequently, while the film's individual elements are acknowledged for their quality, Lenker concludes that the overall production feels somewhat disjointed. This critical stance highlights a common challenge faced by adaptations that must balance entertainment with fidelity to source material.

A third prominent review from The Guardian offers a more critical interpretation, focusing on the film's perceived emotional simplification and uneven storytelling. Critic Peter Bradshaw (2024) describes the film as "off-note," arguing that it sanitizes the original narrative's raw emotional impact in favor of a more palatable, musical format. The review points out that although the visual design and performances are competent, the film lacks the emotional depth and gravitas of both Walker's novel and the 1985 adaptation. Additionally, Bradshaw suggests that the film's attempt to be both uplifting and faithful to darker themes ultimately leads to a diluted message. Therefore, this review underscores the risk of narrative compromise when adapting complex literary texts into musical cinema, especially when aiming for mainstream appeal.

Issue and Working Hypothesis

From the previous review of the literature, it becomes apparent that both the novel *The Color Purple* (1982) and its main film adaptation 2023 have been studied from different angles; many critics focusing primarily on Walker's portrayal of the challenges of a black woman who grows and changes through her experiences with education, marriage, and religion. While many scholars have studied the novel, fewer have compared it to the film, especially when looking at how these three themes affect the main character, Celie. Therefore, the objective of this study is to examine the issues of education, marriage, and religion as developed in both the novel and the film of *The Color Purple*. Through a comparative study, this piece of work explores how different artistic media effectively portray the significant notions of education, marriage, and religion. It also investigates how adaptations can reshape and reinterpret them. However, what is missing in these studies is a direct comparison between the two works that focuses specifically on how education, marriage, and religion shape Celie's transformation. Most critics either stay with the novel or with the film, but they do not put them side by side to see how these themes are interpreted differently.

In other words, this research will explore how both the novel and the movie show Celie's emotional and spiritual evolution, and how the process of learning, relational growth, and spiritual redefinition contribute to her empowerment and self-realization. The study will focus on how education, both at school and through life experiences, helps Celie understand the world. It will also look at marriage, first as a place of pain and control, then later as a space for freedom and equality. Finally, it will explore religion, from Celie's early fear of God to her new, more personal and loving idea of what God is. Celie's relationship with her sister Nettie is also very important. Through Nettie, Celie learns new things and finds hope. Their connection is like an education and a kind of spiritual support that helps Celie grow.

To reach our aim, and as a theoretical framework for our study, we opted for Henry Jenkins's transmedial approach in order to enhance our comprehension of how education,

marriage and religion are interpreted across different artistic platforms (the novel and the film). We will rely some interesting aspects of the transmedial theory which are the story, the technology, and the audience that will help us to illustrate that the changes between the novel and the movie help modern audiences feel and understand the transformation experienced by the main character, Celie, in many ways.

Methodological Outline

At the methodological level, our research paper employs the IMRAD research method. We have divided our research paper into four parts: an introduction in which we have presented the subject (the Review of The Literature by some critiques who have perceived the two selected novel and movie from various perspectives), and then we have raised the purpose of this dissertation (the Issue and Working Hypothesis). Then will come the "method and materials" part in which we will sum up the theoretical concepts that will be used in our work, mainly Henry Jenkin's The Transmedial Theory. Additionally, in "Materials", we will present some relevant biographical elements about both the author and the director, namely Alice Walker and Blitz Bazawule, as well as a brief summary of both the novel and the movie. The Results part however, is devoted to summing up the main findings of our Discussion. The Discussion part, the longest part of our work, will consist of two chapters; each one is divided into sections. We will try to achieve a comparative thematic study of the two works, focusing on the common issues of education, marriage and religion.

II. Methods and Materials

A/ Methods

As already mentioned in the introduction, and in order to analyze the novel and its adaptation, we will utilize the transmedial theory; we will borrow its major concepts to show how it is elaborated.

First, literature and transmediality are interrelated; authors express many issues through narration. Transmediality, or *transmedia storytelling*, is a key theoretical concept that underpins the analysis of how stories are adapted and experienced across different media platforms. The term was first introduced by media scholar Henry Jenkins, who popularized it in his seminal book *Convergence Culture : Where Old and New Media Collide* (2006), although the concept began gaining attention around 2003. The term is composed of two words: “trans” and “media”; it is the process of transferring any piece of literature or elements of fiction to several platforms of media such as movies, animation, comic strips and even video games. Jenkins defines this theory as:

Transmedia storytelling represents a process where integral elements of fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience. Ideally, each medium makes its own contribution to the unfolding of the story. (Jenkins, H. 2007, March 21).

In fact, “Transmedia storytelling” has three aspects: story, technology and the audience. First, a story is essentially a carefully arranged collection of ideas, events, and details about a character. To reach a wide audience, this story needs to be distributed and presented in various formats. This is crucial because different media outlets and platforms attract distinct audiences. A story’s success hinges on its ability to connect with people. Since individuals typically favour specific platforms, modern storytelling often involves spreading the narrative across multiple media channels. (McAdams, 2014). *Defining Multimedia Journalism. Medium*

Then, technology enables the delivery and integration of the story across various platforms. Digital tools such as websites, social media, mobile applications, and video streaming services make it possible to reach audiences in interactive and innovative ways.

Technology not only supports the technical distribution of content but also offers creative possibilities for storytelling. For instance, virtual reality or interactive apps can immerse users in the story world, making the experience more engaging and participatory. If we take the example of television, the internet has influenced programs to implement interactivity (SMS), recreate new temporalities or choices to viewers experiences (Twitter, Telegram), offers new tempolarities or choices to viewers (streaming sites and viewings, catch up TV, and the two most known applications (Netflix and Tim Movies). This technological convergence has led to the development of transmedia storytelling.

Finally, the audience plays an essential role in the success of transmedia storytelling. Unlike traditional storytelling methods, where the audience is passive, transmedia encourages active involvement. Viewers and readers can interact with the story, contribute content, solve puzzles, or even influence narrative outcomes. This participatory culture transforms the audience into co-creators, fostering a deeper emotional connection to the story and its characters.

In addition, building on these brief stipulations, the term “transmedial narration” should be understood to refer to all varieties of transmediality and trans mediation where narration is a media characteristic that is significant enough to be observed. In the most general terms, then, the concept of transmedial narration includes the notion that an abundance of different media types share traits that give them narrative capacities. In more specific terms, transmedial narration also includes the idea that the world is actually full of various sorts of more or less developed and complex narratives communicated by different media types. In its most particular sense, transmedial narration can be understood as transmediation of narratives; the characteristics of narratives can be represented again by dissimilar media types and yet be perceived to be the same despite the transfer. Transmedial

narration, in its most general sense, must be accepted as a reality that has a bearing on a lot of communication.

Furthermore, trans mediation of narratives is extremely common, not only in everyday communication but also in more complex and official systems of communication such as education, research, and legal processes. It also flourishes in religion, art, and entertainment. For some years now, Henry Jenkins's concept of transmedia storytelling has been popular. This concept refers to the modern phenomenon of building large narratives as a sum of partial narratives distributed by different kinds of media such as motion pictures, comics, video games, novels, and various forms of Internet-based media: "A transmedia story unfolds across multiple media platforms with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole" (Jenkins 2008, pp97-98). In fact, this is an old and widespread phenomenon that can be observed in, for instance, Hindu, Greek, and Christian mythologies, although historical and cultural differences can obviously be noted (Ryan 2013; Mittell 2014). Transmedia storytelling-narratives in different media types working together to form a larger whole- requires that narratives can be largely transmediated. It would not be possible to combine narratives from different media types into a larger whole if these narratives did not overlap. In effect, this means that one recognizes represented media characteristics in the different media as the same; thus, represented persons, environments, ideas, events, and their interrelations can interlock.

Moreover, developed transmedial concepts enable careful investigations of how narratives are transmediated in all forms of communication in the whole society, from casual everyday communication to advanced political, artistic, or scientific communication and what the consequences of such transmediations might be in terms of both added and corrupted significance. One vital media characteristic that may be distorted by transmediation, sometimes with immense implications, is truthfulness. coming closer to an understanding of

these processes appears to be urgent. Although it is certainly meaningful and necessary to also investigate media-specific narration, such endeavours will remain incapable of contributing to a broader understanding of narration and human communication at large as long as transmedial narration is not a point of reference.

B/ Materials

1. Biography of Alice Walker

Alice Walker, born on February 9, 1944, in Eatonton, Georgia, is an American novelist, poet, essayist, and activist. She grew up the youngest of eight children in a poor sharecropping family. Her childhood was marked by poverty, segregation, and a tragic accident at the age of eight that left her blind in one eye. Despite these hardships, she developed a strong love for reading and writing, which became tools for expressing her creativity and her fight against injustice.

Walker attended Spelman College in Atlanta before transferring to Sarah Lawrence College in New York, where she graduated in 1965. During her student years, she became deeply involved in the Civil Rights Movement, working in the South to help African Americans register to vote. This experience shaped her lifelong commitment to justice, equality, and human rights.

Her first novel, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* (1970), introduced her as a powerful new literary voice. However, her greatest success came with *The Color Purple* in 1982. The novel tells the story of African American women in the rural South in the early twentieth century, exploring themes of racism, sexism, abuse, resilience, and sisterhood. The book won both the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the National Book Award in 1983, making Walker the first African American woman to receive the Pulitzer Prize for fiction. *The Color Purple* was later adapted into a successful film by Steven Spielberg in 1985, a Broadway musical in 2005, and again into a musical film in 2023.

Beyond her literary work, Alice Walker is a committed activist. She coined the term womanism to describe a form of feminism that centers the experiences of Black women. Throughout her career, she has spoken out against apartheid in South Africa, condemned female genital mutilation, and supported environmental, peace, and human rights causes around the world.

In her personal life, Walker married civil rights lawyer Melvyn Leventhal in 1967, becoming part of the first legally married interracial couple in Mississippi. They later divorced, but she continued raising their daughter, Rebecca Walker, who also became a writer and activist.

Today, Alice Walker is recognized as one of the most important voices in contemporary literature. Her works, combining poetic beauty and political strength, continue to inspire generations of readers. Through her novels, poetry, and activism, she has given a voice to the marginalized and reminded the world of the power of literature to bring about change. She moved to Mississippi to become involved in the Civil Rights Movement. She began teaching and writing poetry, short stories, and essays. In 1967, Walker married Melvyn Rosenman Leventhal, a Jewish civil rights lawyer.

2. Summary of the Novel

The Color Purple is a novel written by Alice Walker, published in 1982; it is a deeply moving story set in rural Georgia in the early 1900s. At the heart of the novel is Celie, a young African-American girl who grows up in a world marked by poverty, violence, and silence. Through a series of raw, heartfelt letters to God, she shares her pain, starting at just 14 years old, when she becomes pregnant from the man she believes is her father. With her mother seriously ill and taken away, Celie is left to care for her sister Nettie, only to be forced shortly after into a violent marriage with a man she calls "Mr."

Celie's early life is shaped by racism, sexism, and deep emotional isolation. She is denied education, treated like property and made to feel invisible. But even in the darkness, a spark of hope remains, her unbreakable bond with her sister Nettie. That connection, along with the friendships she eventually builds, becomes the foundation of her journey toward healing.

The novel's form, told entirely through letters, is part of what makes it so powerful. Through Celie's words, we are invited into her most private fears and dreams. As she begins to grow, so does her voice. Her letters shift in tone; they become stronger, more assured. Along the way, Celie meets several unforgettable characters who help her reshape her life. Shug Avery, a bold and free-spirited blues singer, becomes much more than Albert's former lover, she opens Celie's eyes to self-love, desire, and freedom. Sofia, Harpo's fierce and independent wife, teaches her that it is possible to stand up to oppression. Even Harpo, trying to break away from his father's harmful legacy, gives Celie insight into how cycles of violence can affect everyone, men included.

Walker also brings to life the richness of African-American culture. The characters speak in a vibrant, expressive dialect that reflects their roots and traditions. Through Celie's letters and Nettie's missionary work in Africa, the novel draws connections between the past and present, slavery and colonialism, struggle and survival. Despite the hardships they face, the characters, especially the women show remarkable strength, creativity, and spirit. As Celie grows, she finds the courage to leave Albert and take back her life. She starts her own business designing pants, a powerful symbol of freedom and independence, and for the first time, she lives on her own terms. Her story comes full circle when she is reunited with Nettie and the children she thought were lost forever. In that moment, she not only finds her family again, but also she discovers her roots, her worth, and a deep sense of peace.

To conclude, *The Color Purple* is more than a novel; it is a testament to the human spirit. It won the Pulitzer Prize in 1983 and was adapted into a major film by Steven Spielberg. Alice Walker's portrayal of Black women, their pain, their power, and their path to self-discovery, continues to touch hearts and inspire readers worldwide. Above all, it is a celebration of love, sisterhood, and the strength that comes from finally being seen and heard.

3. Summary of the Movie

The Color Purple is a 2023 American musical period drama film adaptation of the novel and Broadway play. It tells the powerful and moving story of Celie, a black woman in the early 20th century American South, who endures immense hardship but ultimately finds strength, resilience, and sisterhood. The early twentieth century in the United States was a time of profound social and cultural change, but it remained marked by inequality and exclusion. For African Americans, especially those living in the rural South, daily life was still dominated by the legacy of slavery and the persistence of segregation laws known as "Jim Crow." These laws legally enforced racial separation in schools, transportation, housing, and public spaces, creating an environment where Black communities were systematically denied equal opportunities. Economic hardship also weighed heavily, as most African Americans were confined to low-paying agricultural or domestic labor.

For Black women, the challenges were even greater. They carried what scholars often call a "double burden": the oppression of racism on the one hand and the restrictions of patriarchy on the other. Many women were denied access to education, forced into early marriages, and expected to fulfill roles of obedience and servitude. Marriage often meant subordination, while education and literacy were seen as privileges reserved for men. Religion, too, played an ambivalent role. On one side, it was used to justify women's silence and submission; on the other, spiritual traditions gave many women strength, solidarity, and hope for liberation.

Despite these obstacles, the early twentieth century was not only a period of oppression but also one of resilience and awakening. Movements for racial uplift, women's rights, and labor organization began to gain visibility. The Great Migration, which saw many African Americans leave the South for northern cities, opened new horizons in education, work, and cultural life. Writers, activists, and community leaders started to challenge the systems of inequality and to imagine alternative futures.

It is within this historical context that Alice Walker situates *The Color Purple*. By focusing on the intertwined struggles of race, gender, and class, Walker captures the realities faced by African American women in this era while also highlighting their capacity for resistance, growth, and self-discovery. Her novel, and later its film adaptations, reflect not only the injustices of the time but also the beginnings of empowerment that would shape future generations. It is the second film adaptation of the novel, following the 1985 film directed by Steven Spielberg and produced by Spielberg and Quincy Jones. They return as producers for the 2023 film, along with its Broadway producers Scott Sanders and Oprah Winfrey, the latter of whom starred in the 1985 film. *The Color Purple* premiered in London on November 20, 2023. And was released in the United States on December 25, 2023, by Warner Bros. Pictures.

Three soundtrack albums were released for the film; the first album, *The Color Purple* (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack), was released on December 15, 2023, and feature the film's musical numbers performed by the cast. The second album, *The Color Purple* (Music from and Inspired by the Motion Picture) was released on December 22. And also feature the musical numbers alongside songs that are not used as musical numbers in the film and performed by popular artists. The third album, *The Color Purple* (Original Motion Picture Score), was released on December 25 by WaterTower, and feature the film's original score composed by Kris Bowers.

The film centers on Celie, a young African American woman who endures a harsh suffering. She experiences abuse from her father, who forces her into marriage with a cruel and domineering man named Albert “Mister” Johnson. Despite the adversity she faces, Celie finds strength and support in the bonds of sisterhood. Nettie also plays a huge role in Celie’s life, even while being physically separated. Nettie’s letters keep Celie’s hope alive.

III. Results

Through our comparative thematic analysis of *The Color Purple* (1982) by Alice Walker and its 2023 film adaptation, we have explored one of the most powerful literary and cinematic productions that have shaped cultural discourses around education, marriage, and religion in the lives of African American women. These two versions offer a compelling representation of black female identity and the oppressive structures that have long silenced their voices. Our study of both the novel and the film has been conducted using the transmedial approach, which allows us to investigate how similar themes are adapted and transformed across different media.

The first chapter focuses on education and marriage. Both versions depict the protagonist's journey from ignorance and forced submission to awareness and agency. In the novel, education comes primarily through letter-writing, which allows Celie to develop her voice, while in the film, this inner growth is visualized through cinematic techniques such as facial expression, body language, and color symbolism. In terms of marriage, both the book and the film criticize arranged and abusive unions, showing how marriage has often been a tool of control rather than love. Celie's transformation challenges this patriarchal institution as she gains independence and economic freedom by the end of the story.

The second chapter is dedicated to the theme of religion. At the beginning of the novel, Celie writes letters to a distant and silent God, shaped by institutional Christianity and male authority. As the narrative progresses, especially through her friendship with Shug Avery, she redefines her spirituality, embracing a pantheistic and personal vision of the divine. This religious evolution is visually emphasized in the film through light, music, and natural imagery. The film adaptation, while faithful to the spiritual journey, uses emotional performance and cinematographic choices to make Celie's transformation more immediate

and accessible to a modern audience. In both versions, religion becomes a source of liberation once disconnected from traditional norms.

The results of our comparative analysis reveal that although *The Color Purple* has been expressed through two different media and historical moments, the core themes remain powerful and consistent. Both the novel and the film advocate for women's empowerment, racial equality, and spiritual freedom. Despite the differences in form and delivery, they share a common purpose: to give voice to those who were long unheard and to challenge oppressive systems through storytelling. Hence, Alice Walker's literary work and its 2023 film adaptation belong to the same tradition of social problem narratives, offering a transmedial dialogue between literature and cinema.

IV. Discussion

This part of our work is devoted to the analysis of the main issues of our selected primary sources; both Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982) and its film adaptation (2023)

deal with a wide range of themes. For instance, notions such as racism, gender and family relations are extensively developed in both works. However, this part sheds light on the three selected issues, which are education, marriage and religion.

CHAPTER ONE: Female Education and Marriage in *The Color Purple* (1982) and its Film Adaptation (2023).

As previously stated, both the novel and its film adaptation develop extensively the two issues of education and marriage. To start with the book, education finds full expression in it as a complex issue which goes beyond the act of going to school to learn. Through Celie, the main character, Walker details different aspects of the protagonist's education.

1. Education in *The Color purple* (1982)

Celie is introduced at the start of the book as a fourteen-year-old black girl who lives in a poor and harsh world. She is from the rural South in the early 1900s, a time when racism, sexism, and poverty made life very hard for black women. From the very beginning, we see that Celie is neither free nor happy, she is controlled and abused by the man she believes is her father. The latter tells her to never tell anyone but God, so she starts writing letters to God to share her pain.

Celie suffers great trauma even though she is so young. She has had two children because of rape, and they were taken away from her. She does not know where they are or even if they are alive. She has no voice in her family, and she is told she is ugly and stupid, so she starts to believe it. Her self-esteem is very low, and she thinks she does not deserve love or kindness. Worse, she is also denied an education. While her younger sister Nettie is allowed to go to school, Celie has to stay home to help around the house and take care of others. Her body and her time are not her own; she is used, ignored, and treated like she does

not matter. She accepts this silently because she feels she has no choice. She does not fight back, not because she agrees, but because she is too scared and has no support.

Even though she is quiet and obedient all the time, the letters she writes have a deeper meaning. They reveal a girl who is trying to survive, hoping for a better life, and who still believes that God might care about her. These letters become her only way to express herself, to process her emotions, and to hold on to her small sense of self. "I am fourteen years old. I have always been a good girl. Maybe you can give me a sign letting me know what is happening to me." (Walker, 1982, p. 8). So, the previous quote illustrates that being uneducated about life, body, and emotions can leave a young girl like Celie feeling powerless and confused. Education gives people strength, voice, and the ability to protect themselves. Without it, Celie does not know what to do or how to ask for help.

Celie at the beginning is hurt, lost, and pushed down. She is mostly shaped by pain, fear, silence, and the need to just make it through the day. This shows that Celie is just a child (only fourteen), yet she feels scared and confused. Bad things are happening to her, but she does not understand them. Nobody ever explained to her how her body works, what is right or wrong, or whom she is allowed to say no to. This means she has no education about life, and because of that, she feels lost. When Celie says she has always been "a good girl," she means that she always listens to adults, follows rules, and does what she is told. She thinks that by being obedient, she will be safe. But sadly, even though she behaves well, she still gets hurt. She does not understand why this is happening. That is why she talks to God and asks for a "sign." She has no one else to talk to, and no one to help her understand what is going on. This shows how important education is. But there is something inside her that is still alive. As the story continues, we watch her grow.

As already mentioned, education is a key notion in *The Color Purple*. At first, Celie starts writing letters to God because she has no one else to talk to about her pain. This act of writing becomes her way to express herself and understand her life. Throughout the story, education is shown as a gain of freedom and self-confidence. For example, Nettie, Celie's sister, is completely focused on learning; she is not just studying during school hours or for a little bit; she is studying all the time, both during the day and at night. "I study everything night and day." (Walker,1982, p.74). This tells us how serious and passionate she is about learning "I read and read until I thought my eyes would fall out." (Walker,1982, p.74). By this, she means that she spends so much time reading that she is very tired. When it comes to learning, Nettie is very serious and hardworking "Nettie the clever one in this bunch. I want to git her some more schooling." (Walker,1982, p.14). Celie is happy that Nettie has the chance to go to school and continue her education. This shows that Celie values education, even if she herself did not get much of it. She understands that learning is important and wants something better for her sister. She knows that education can help Nettie have a better life, with more freedom and opportunities. It also shows that Celie is kind and unselfish. Even though she suffers and does not have the chance to study herself, she still wishes better luck for Nettie. Inspired by her sister, Celie considers education as a way to escape suffering and find freedom. She believes that knowledge can change her life. For people like her, who have been abused, ignored, or silenced, learning is a way to become powerful.

Importantly, education is not just reading and writing at school, it also means learning about your body, your feelings, your rights, and how to protect yourself. If Celie had this kind of education and someone to talk to, she would understand her situation better. She would not feel so scared or alone. But because she does not have any support or knowledge, she stays silent and trapped in her suffering. This refers to another kind of education, different from that of the classroom. It is embodied in curiosity and the desire to understand the world.

However, Celie tells us that her sister Nettie always tries to teach her, even when life is very hard. Nettie does not stop helping her understand the world. She teaches her little by little, with patience and love. Celie trusts her and enjoys learning from her; that is why she says Nettie is a “good teacher.” “No matter what happen, Nettie steady try to teach me what go on in the world. And she a good teacher, too...” (Walker, 1982, p.19)

As previously stated, education does not only mean school and books; for Celie, there is another kind of education, and the most important lessons come from her sister, Nettie, who teaches her about the world, about people, about right and wrong, and about life outside their home. Even when they are far apart, Nettie continues teaching her through letters.

We have already written that at the beginning of the story, Celie is silent, and confused. She does not understand what is happening to her or how to defend herself. But when Nettie shares knowledge with her, Celie slowly begins to change. She becomes curious and starts thinking by herself. For instance, she starts reading more, asking more questions, and acquiring confidence, so she understands that education is a source of power. Nettie’s lessons are like light in Celie’s dark world. Thanks to education, Celie moves from silence to speech, from fear to strength.

However, Nettie is not the only source of education and learning for Celie. Shug Avery, a friend of Celie’s teaches her that she must stand up for herself and fight for her freedom, respect, and happiness “But she keep on. You got to fight. You got to fight.” But Celie replies that she does not know how to do that. All she has ever done is trying to survive “But I don’t know how to fight. All I know how to do is stay alive.” (Walker,1982, p.19). This part is very important because it shows how Celie has never been taught how to act confidently. From a young age, she has been abused, silenced, and controlled. She never had the chance to learn how to express herself, make choices, or even believe that she deserves

better. Celie's words, "I don't know how to fight"; show her lack of life education. She was not given the tools or the knowledge to defend herself. No one taught her how to say "no," how to think by herself, or how to believe in herself. This is not only about school but also about life education (finding love, joy, and reaching freedom).

Shug Avery is convinced that education is not only about going to school or reading books ("I think us here to wonder, myself. To wonder. To ask. And that in wondering bout the big things and asking bout the big things, you learn about the little ones...")(Walker,1982, p.130). By this, she means that people should be curious about life and try to understand the world around them. Shug says that asking about big things like life, death, God, or purpose helps us understand the small things too, like our feelings, our relationships, and how we live every day. This teaches us that real learning does not always come from teachers or classrooms. It can come from inside ourselves, from experiences, or from talking to people. Shug becomes another teacher for Celie, even though she is not a traditional teacher. She helps Celie learn how to think by herself, to ask questions, and to grow. This shows that true education is about opening your mind and being curious, not just memorizing facts. Shug's words remind us that education can happen anywhere, and that thinking and "wondering" are effective ways to learn.

The Issue of Marriage in *The Color Purple* 1982

We carry on our analysis by exploring the notion of marriage, which is another important theme in *The Color Purple*, but rather than representing love and partnership, it is portrayed as an oppressive relationship through which black women at that time are subjected to violence, silence, and male domination.

Again, Celie is talking about her marriage in a very negative way. When she says "Well, sometime Mr. _____ git on me pretty hard. I have to talk to Old Maker. But he my husband. I

shrug my shoulders. This life soon be over, I say. Heaven last all ways.” (Walker, 1982, p.32). By these words, she means that he hurts her, probably by hitting her or being mean. This short quotation by Celie, talking to Harpo, tells the reader that Mister (her husband) hits her when Harpo is not around to see it “He beat me when you not here” (Walker, 1982, p.48). These words show how painful and abusive Celie’s marriage is. Her husband does not treat her with love or kindness. Instead, he hurts her when no one is watching. He treats her worse than the children. In fact, he does not hit the children as much as he hits Celie. Even worse, he tells her to bring the belt, the thing he uses to hurt her. This makes the abuse even more cruel because she is forced to help with her own punishment “He beat me like he beat the children. Cept he do not never hardly beat them. He say, Celie, git the belt.” (Walker, 1982, p.22). Celie can not speak up or fight back. She suffers quietly. Instead of feeling safe with her husband, Celie feels scared and alone. The quote helps us understand how some women, like Celie, were trapped in violent relationships with no way out.

This also makes us, readers, understand how weak Celie feels. She cannot stop the violence, and she does not have anyone to protect her. In a marriage, a husband is supposed to care for and support his wife, but here, Celie is treated more like an object than a person. The quote reveals the fear, loneliness, and suffering that Celie lives with daily, and how her marriage is defined by pain, not love or respect.

This shows that she is living in pain, but she feels she cannot do anything about it. She has no one to help her or protect her, so she talks to “Old Maker,” which is her way of saying God. She turns to God for comfort because she feels so alone. Then she says, “But he my husband,” which means she accepts the abuse because she thinks it is her duty as a wife. By shrugging her shoulders, she shows that she feels powerless like she can not change her situation. She believes that this life is full of suffering and that the only peace she will ever get is in heaven, after she dies. She says, “This life soon be over,” to show that she is just waiting

for her life to end. "Heaven last all ways" means she believes that only in the afterlife will she finally be happy. This is very sad because it shows how deeply hurt and hopeless Celie feels. She does not see a way to escape the abuse, so she just tries to survive and puts all her hope in a better life after death. This shows how marriage for her is not about love or joy, it is about pain, silence, and waiting for the suffering to stop.

In addition, Harpo, Mister's son, is confused about Celie's situation and asks his father why he hurts her, but the father's answer is simple but cruel "Harpo ast his daddy why he beat me. Mr. _____ say, Cause she my wife." (Walker,1982, p22). Because she is his wife, he believes he can treat her however he wants. This shows that in late african american culture, marriage does not mean love or respect, but power and control. The husband feels he owns his wife, and that gives him permission to be violent. This idea is wrong and causes a lot of pain for women like Celie. The quote helps us understand how marriage can be unfair and dangerous when one partner is allowed to hurt the other without consequences. It also explains why Celie's life is full of suffering and why she must find strength to change her situation.

In fact, Celie's husband's ill treatment of her is understandable. Celie's marriage was not chosen, and was not a result of love. Mr. _____ did not marry her because he liked her; he just needed someone to cook, clean, and raise his kids "Mr. _____ marry me to take care of his children. I marry him cause my daddy made me." (Walker,1982, p.43). For him, a wife was like a helper, not someone to love or respect. Similarly, Celie did not marry him because she wanted to; Her father forced her, and she had no say in the decision. This shows that Celie had no freedom or power over her own life. In her world, marriage was not something beautiful; it was more like a job or a deal between men. Women like Celie were treated like property, not as people. This quote helps us understand how unfair and painful marriage could

be for women, especially when they had no rights or choice. Celie did not get love or happiness from her marriage, only work, silence, and suffering.

The shift in Celie's attitude towards her husband, Mister came when Celie is finally rebelling against his abusive treatment, "Until you do right by me, I say, everything you even dream about will fail." (Walker, 1982, p.102). For many years, he has treated her badly, beating her, insulting her, and controlling her in their marriage. But now, Celie finds her voice and tells him that he will never succeed in life until he treats her with respect. When she says do right by me, she means that he should be kind and treat her like a human being. And when she says "everything you even dream about will fail," she is warning him that if he keeps being cruel, nothing good will come to him, not even his hopes or plans.

For many years, she has been hurt, controlled, and made to feel useless, especially in her marriage to Mister. He beats her, insults her, and treats her like a servant. He made her believe she was nothing. Society also made her feel inferior because she is black and poor. On top of that, she thinks she is not good at cooking, which is something women were expected to do well in a marriage. All these things made her feel like she did not deserve love, respect, or happiness. But Celie finally speaks with confidence, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, "I may be poor, Black, ugly, and can't cook"; she accepts the way she is. But then she says, "But I'm here." which means that she does not pretend to be perfect. She says clearly this is a key statement in the novel which means: "I have survived everything. I still exist. I still matter." Even though her husband and others tried to erase her voice and break her spirit, they failed. Celie is tired of being silent. She begins to stand up and fight for herself. This moment marks her emotional freedom she no longer lets her husband's cruelty or society's judgment define her. In terms of marriage, this quote shows how Celie's relationship with Mister was built on abuse and domination, not love or equality. But now, she starts to believe that she deserves more. She is no longer just someone's wife or someone's victim.

She is a human being with her own identity. This moment is not just about escaping a bad marriage, it is about discovering her own worth. Celie begins to take control of her life, and that is what makes this quote so powerful and emotional.

This moment is very powerful because Celie is no longer afraid of him. In her marriage, she used to be silent and obedient. Now, she is confident and strong. She is no longer letting him hurt her. She speaks clearly and shows that she knows her value as a woman. The previous quote shows that true marriage should be built on respect and kindness, not fear and control. Celie teaches Mister that mistreating someone, especially your partner, has consequences. It also shows how Celie transforms from a quiet, hurt woman into a person who demands justice and dignity.

Sofia is another woman (female character) who suffers from the harshness of life towards wives and daughters, especially in families where men try to control everything. When she says, "A girl child ain't safe in a family of men. But I never thought I'd have to fight in my own house." (Walker, 1982, p. 31). She means that young girls are not protected; they are often mistreated, hurt, or forced to obey men. She thought that danger would only come from outside the home. But then she says, "I never thought I'd have to fight in my own house." This shows her deep disappointment. She did not expect that after getting married, she would have to fight her own husband, someone who is supposed to love her and make her feel safe.

As a result, Sofia is clearly upset with how her husband Harpo is treating her. Since they got married, Harpo has been trying to make her "mind"; in other words, he wants her to obey him without asking questions "I'm gitting tired of Harpo, she say. All he think about since us married is how to make me mind. He don't want a wife, he want a dog." (Walker, 1982, p 44).

But Sofia is a strong, independent woman who wants to be treated with respect, not as someone to control. When she says “he don’t want a wife, he want a dog,” (Walker, 1982,p.44) she compares herself to a dog because a dog is expected to follow its owner’s orders without talking back. This shows that Harpo is not looking for a true partner, someone equal, but someone who is silent and always agrees with him. Sofia is tired of this kind of marriage, in which her opinion does not matter and she feels like she has to fight to keep her freedom. Although, Harpo is not violent like Mister, he still follows society’s idea that a man should be the boss and the woman should be quiet. This means that marriage, instead of giving her peace and protection, has brought problems.

However, Sofia is strong and refuses to be treated like she is less than a man, but she is tired of always having to defend herself, even inside her own home. It highlights how unfair and painful some relationships can be when women are not respected. In simple words, the strength of Sofia shows that not all women in the story are silent or passive; some fight back. This quote also helps us understand how marriage can become unhealthy when it is based on control, not love, communication, or equality.

2. Education and Marriage in the Film Adaptation of The Color Purple(2023)

Similarly to the novel, the film also examines the issue of education through many different scenes. In the 2023 musical, education is not just about what you learn in school. It is also about figuring out how to speak up for yourself, understanding your feelings, and being confident in your spirituality. All of these things help you become truly free and be your real self. The movie deals with learning in lots of ways : through formal schooling, by gaining practical skills, by growing emotionally, and by developing spiritually. Music is a

significant part of this; it helps the characters learn and also stands for finding your own unique voice in the world.



Figure 01: The opening scene from The Color Purple (Georgia, 2023, 01 :31)

In this presented scene from *The Color Purple* (2023), Celie and Nettie are seen enjoying a happy moment together outdoors. They are both wearing the same white dresses, which shows their close bond as sisters and their shared innocence. However, even though they look similar, the scene also shows differences between them, but they are not seen directly. These differences come from the way their lives are changing, especially when it comes to education and how society treats them as young Black women. Nettie looks full of hope and confidence, which may show that she has more chances to learn and grow. On the other hand, Celie seems quieter and more reserved, showing that her life is more limited because of the lack of education and the way others control her.

First, Nettie is younger, more carefree than Celie, her sister. She seems confident with her bright smile and fancy straw hat. Because she is the smart one who gets to go to school, the way she stands and acts shows she has a lot of hope and possibilities for her future. Her schooling also kept her from having adult duties too early, letting her stay young-looking and hopeful. So, Nettie shows us what education can give you: choices, respect, and the chance to dream big.

On the other hand, Celie's visible pregnancy at such a young age tells us that not being able to read or write and not having school chances has trapped her in an adult life way too soon. Even though she is sharing a happy moment with her sister, her pregnant belly is a strong

visual reminder that uneducated black women were often forced into becoming mothers and taking on household chores very early. Plus, while Nettie's education gives her a way out of typical women's roles, Celie's lack of education keeps her stuck in a life of serving others and having children.

In the early 1900s, for African American society, this scene shows how education was a major dividing line between having opportunities and being held back. The movie also shows how, even in the same family, different access to learning could lead to completely different life paths. Still, even with these differences in education, the sisters' matching white dresses and shared laughter show their strong emotional bond.



Figure 02 : Nettie and Celie in The Color Purple (2023, 15 : 49)

At the very beginning of the film, we learn that Celie can not go to school, and she does not know how to read or write. However, her younger sister, Nettie, tries her best to teach her at home. We then see several heartwarming scenes where Nettie patiently helps Celie learn the alphabet and how to write simple words, as it is shown in this scene, she tries to learn and to know about Africa. Nettie is shown to be very patient and kind, and it is clear she strongly believes that Celie deserves to learn. This particular moment is important because it shows us that even if you do not go to a formal school, learning can still happen when there is love and support. In fact, this is the crucial first step in Celie's long journey of personal growth.



Figure 03 : Mister and Alphonso in The Color Purple (2023,

14:17)

Mister first asks Alphonso if he can marry Nettie, but Alphonso quickly says no, explaining that "Nettie's too smart" and will "be a schoolteacher." Instead, he points Mister to Celie, saying, "But I'll let you have Celie, though." Alphonso then cruelly adds that Celie "is ugly, but will work hard like a man." This whole conversation clearly shows how women were seen as things to be traded and judged by what they could do.

Furthermore, getting an education was the main way black women could gain freedom and respect. Nettie's smarts and schooling protected her from being forced into marriage and becoming a servant. Also, her future as a schoolteacher made her more important in society, so she could not just be given away. On the other side, Celie's lack of formal education made her easy to take advantage of, and her worth was only seen in her ability to do physical work.



Figure 04 : Celie's discovery of Nettie's letters in The Color Purple (2023, 01 : 17 : 28)

When Celie reads Nettie's letters, it becomes a kind of late education for her. At first, she had no chance to go to school, but now, through these letters, she starts to learn many things. First of all, the letters help her practice reading. This makes her reading better, step by step. Also, the letters teach her about the world outside her home. For example, she learns about Africa, other people's cultures, and her family history.



Figure 05 : The portrayal of the African's culture in The Color Purple (2023, 01 :19 :29)

In addition, the letters give her comfort and love. They show her that Nettie still cares for her, even from far away. This makes Celie feel stronger and less alone. The letters also show how important reading and writing are. Thanks to them, Celie and Nettie can stay connected, even across many years and miles. Moreover, the film shows these scenes with special images. While Celie reads, we see pictures of the places Nettie talks about. This helps Celie imagine a bigger world and gives her hope for her own life.



Figure 06 : Nettie in Africa in The Color Purple (2023, 01 :20 :36)

In addition, the scene shows Celie reading Nettie's letters using short video scenes called montages. These montages are very powerful because they mix different types of images and emotions. First, we see Celie reading the letters slowly and carefully. At the same time, we see pictures of the places Nettie is writing about, such as African villages, people working or dancing, children in school, and beautiful landscapes. These pictures help Celie and also the viewer understand what Nettie is talking about, even though Celie has never left her home.

Also, during these scenes, we see Celie's face and how she reacts. Sometimes she looks happy, sometimes shocked, and sometimes deeply moved. Her emotions are shown clearly, so we can feel what she feels. This makes the learning experience very real for her, even though she is not actually there. In a way, Celie is learning by watching and feeling. This is called vicarious education, which means learning from someone else's experience.

Furthermore, these scenes do more than just teach facts. They help Celie dream of a different life. For the first time, she sees that the world is bigger than her small town. She realizes that other ways of living are possible. The letters open her mind and give her hope. They also show her that she is connected to a larger story and that she has a place in the world, just like Nettie. Through the montages, the film shows that education is not only about school, it also comes from stories, letters, feelings, and imagination. For Celie, reading the letters is not just about learning words, it is about growing, healing, and finding the strength to believe in herself and her future.



Figure 07 : A lively moment in church in The Color Purple (2023, 04 :53)

This church scene from *The Color Purple* (2023) strongly shows how music, faith, and movement come together to create a form of community education. Through singing, dancing, and preaching, people share emotions, beliefs, and life lessons. The preacher's strong voice and the joyful movement of the choir teach messages of hope, strength, and unity. The church becomes more than a religious space, it becomes a place of learning and healing. Using bright colors, body language, and shared rhythm, the film shows that learning does not only happen in schools. It also happens in everyday places like church, where culture, faith, and emotion are passed from one person to another.

Furthermore, when we study the film through a transmedial lens, which means looking at how different forms like music, images, and storytelling work together, we can see that community education becomes very important. In the film, learning happens not just through words or letters, but also through songs, group scenes, and emotional expression. For example, the church is shown as a place where people sing gospel songs together. These songs are not only for praying, they also teach people how to be strong, how to have hope, and how to support each other.

This type of learning is called community education, and in the film, it is shown through powerful musical numbers. The film mixes sound (music), performance (body language and dancing), and visuals (lighting, costumes, and group settings) to create emotional and educational moments. Through this mix of media, we see how music helps pass down culture, history, and faith from one generation to the next. These scenes work like informal classrooms, where people learn not by reading or writing, but by listening, singing, and sharing.

Also, the way the songs are performed, with many voices coming together, shows that learning is both personal and shared. Each character has their own voice, but they sing together in harmony. This suggests that education in the film is not only about individual growth, but also about unity, culture, and the strength of the community.



Figure 08 : Shug Avery and Celie in The Color Purple (2023, 01 :01 :11)

This intimate scene from *The Color Purple* (2023) captures a deeply emotional and transformative moment between Shug Avery and Celie. Shug, standing close behind Celie, gently helps her dress in a black gown with

shiny decorations. Celie looks nervous and unsure, while Shug smiles warmly and speaks softly, encouraging her. The lighting is warm and dim, creating a private and safe space. Shug's hands rest gently on Celie's shoulders, showing tenderness and care. Celie touches the dress with hesitation, as if she is not used to feeling beautiful. This scene is quiet, but full of meaning ; it is one of the most important moments of growing in the film.

This scene shows how Shug teaches Celie in a way that goes far beyond school or books. First, the way Shug dresses Celie is a physical and emotional act of teaching. She is not only helping her put on a dress, but also showing her that she is worthy of attention, beauty, and care. This is a lesson through touch, body language, and eye contact, not through words alone.

Second, the use of light and color is important. The soft, golden light makes the space feel warm and peaceful. It reflects the gentle relationship between Shug and Celie. The shiny black dress contrasts with Celie's usual plain clothes, symbolizing a new version of herself, more confident, more alive. This visual change teaches Celie to see herself differently.

Third, Shug's voice and smile are part of the emotional lesson. She speaks kindly, with joy and encouragement. Her voice is like music, calm, loving, and supportive. The sound helps Celie relax and trust her. This is an emotional and musical way of teaching confidence.

Finally, the mirror (which may be shown later in the scene) becomes a symbol of reflection and growth. Shug helps Celie look at herself not with shame but with pride. This act shows that education is not only about learning facts, but it can also be about learning to value oneself.

Unlike the novel, the 2023 film adaptation of *The Color Purple* uses a transmedial approach combining music, visuals, movement, and emotion to show how education helps women grow. In contrast, marriage is shown as something very different from love or

romance. Instead of being a partnership between two people who care for each other, marriage is used as a way to control women and make decisions about their lives. In the film, we see that men often choose wives based on what they want or need not on love. Girls like Celie are given away by their fathers, not asked what they want. Marriage becomes more like a business deal, where women are treated like property. They are expected to cook, clean, and have children, without being respected or listened to.



Figure 09 : Celie dealing with chaos and disorder in The Color Purple (2023, 17 :45)

In this scene, the camera is turned on Celie, who is alone in the kitchen, working alone. She is preparing food at a large wooden table, surrounded by scattered items and an untidy room. The lighting is dim and yellowish, giving a heavy, tired feeling. The windows are small, letting in only a bit of sunlight. The space feels closed, quiet, and worn down, almost like a cage. Celie looks focused, but also distant, as if her mind is somewhere else. There is no joy or connection in this scene, only routine and silence. Moreover, this scene is a strong visual representation of what Celie's marriage to Mister really feels like. It shows how marriage, for her, is not about love or respect but about hard work, silence, and being unseen. Instead of being treated as a wife or equal, Celie is reduced to a servant in her own home. The kitchen becomes her main space, not as a place of care, but as a place of endless labor.



Figure 10 : Celie in The Color Purple (2023, 17 :54)

Additionally, through a transmedial lens, we can understand how this meaning is created using different

elements. The set design (dirty dishes, broken furniture, scattered objects) tells us that Celie's world is full of disorder and neglect. The warm but dim lighting adds to the feeling of heaviness and sadness. The camera frames her alone in the middle of the room, making her seem small and trapped in the space. These visual choices work together to show us what her marriage feels like without needing any words. In short, this scene shows that marriage, for Celie, is not a partnership²; it is a lonely, exhausting, and unkind experience. She lives more like a worker or a prisoner than a loved wife. The film uses space, light, and silence to let us feel how isolated and powerless she is in her married life.



Figure 11 : Sofia's personality and her relation with Harpo in The Color Purple (2023,30 :32)

At the beginning, the first scene with Celie's sister shows that she is strong and confident in the cafeteria. She stands tall and proud, and she looks straight at others with a serious and brave expression. She wears her special hat, which makes her stand out. She is placed at the front of the scene, and the camera focuses on her. Meanwhile, Harpo, her husband, is behind her. He looks smaller and less sure of himself, because of how they are shown in the scene, the film tells us something important. Usually, in many stories and real-life situations from the past, the man is the one who controls the home. But in this scene, it is Sofia who looks like the one in charge. The way she stands, the way she looks, and where the camera places her all show that she has power and strength in the marriage. This challenges the usual idea that the husband is always the leader. Instead, Sofia shows that women can be strong and respected too.



Figure12 : Sofia's power in The Color Purple (2023,42 :34)

This scene shows that Sofia and Harpo's marriage is full of struggle, but unlike Celie's marriage, Sofia refuses to be passive or silent. From the beginning, she stands up for herself. Even when they argue or fight, she does not back down. Instead, she speaks loudly, moves with strength, and makes her feelings clear. Her actions show that she wants respect.

In addition, the film uses different tools to help us understand this. The fight, the song, the body movements, the camera angles, and the music all work together. These parts do not just entertain us, but they help us feel Sofia's power and pain. For example, the loud rhythm of her song shows her anger. The strong way she moves her body shows her confidence. The way the camera focuses on her face and body reminds us that she cannot be ignored.

Also, we can see that Sofia and Harpo's marriage, even though it has problems, is more equal than Celie's marriage to Mister. This is because Sofia does not let herself be treated like property. She demands to be heard and respected. Her music becomes her voice, and her body becomes her shield. She uses everything she has ; her words, her actions, her songs to protect her dignity.

In both the novel and the film adaptation, the themes of education and marriage are powerfully explored. Walker shows that education is not limited to formal schooling but extends to emotional, moral, and spiritual growth, as reflected in Celie's journey. At the same time, marriage is depicted as a structure of oppression that women must confront and resist. Together, these two works emphasize that true empowerment comes when women claim the right to learn, to define themselves, and to reshape their relationships on their own terms.

Chapter Two: The Issue of Religion in *The Color Purple* (1982) and its Film Adaptation (2023)

Religion has always been a crucial aspect in shaping every society, providing both moral guidance and social control. In *The Color Purple* and its 2023 film adaptation, religion is given significant importance. Both works show how traditional faith is often used to justify oppression, while at the same time suggesting that spirituality can also become a source of hope, strength, and personal freedom.

1. The Notion of Religion in the novel

In Alice Walker's book, Celie narrates the story through a series of letters most of which are addressed to God. At the beginning of the book, she imagines God as an old white man. Celie believes that God is like a big man in the sky who watches everything. She prays to him and writes letters because she feels he is the only one who will not judge her. She cannot tell anyone else about her pain, especially the abuse she suffers, so she tells God. But even when she writes "Dear God," she does not always feel like He is answering her. This shows that Celie's relationship with religion is full of confusion and silence, "I have always been a good girl. Maybe you can give me a sign letting me know what is happening to me." (Walker, 1982, p.8). She talks to God because she does not understand what is happening in her

life, especially the abuse she is suffering. She believes that if she is a "good girl," God should protect her or at least explain why she is in pain, she hopes for help but often feels alone. This shows that Celie sees God as a powerful judge, someone who watches her behavior and decides what happens to her. She hopes for help but often feels alone. At this point in the story, Celie is still very innocent and does not question religion. She thinks that if she suffers, it must be because she did something wrong. That is why she asks God for a sign. She hopes He will explain or help her, but she is also afraid that God might blame her too. This shows how religion, for Celie, is at first connected with guilt, silence, and fear, not comfort.

When Celie describes God like this, "He big and old and tall and graybearded and white. He wear white robes and go barefooted," (Walker, 1982, p.97), she is describing the way she pictures God in her mind. This image is very traditional, like the pictures in churches, books, or told by people in power. Celie believes this is the true God because that is what she has always been told. But this God looks nothing like her. He is white, male, old, and far away from her life and struggles. This shows how Celie's understanding of religion is shaped by society, not by her own experience. She has been taught to respect and fear this God, to obey without asking questions. She feels that this God only watches and judges, instead of loving or helping her. That is why her religion at the beginning of the story feels cold, distant, and even painful. Shug adds, "God is everything, say Shug. Everything that is or ever was or ever will be. And when you can feel that, and be happy to feel that, you've found It." (Walker, 1982, p.98), here Shug shares a very deep and personal way of thinking about God. She says, "God is everything." This idea is called pantheism, which means seeing God as being part of everything in the universe.

This way of thinking is very different from the strict, church-based religion Celie grew up with. Before, Celie believed God was a powerful man who watched and judged her. That

belief made her feel weak, scared, and alone. But Shug's words give her a new kind of faith, a spiritual belief where God is not judging from far away, but living inside her and around her.

When Shug says, "And when you can feel that, and be happy to feel that, you've found It " she means that true religion or spirituality is not about rules or fear. It is about feeling joy, peace, and connection with the world. If you can look at the sky, a tree, or a friend and feel something beautiful, that's feeling God. It is not something you learn from a book or hear from a preacher. It is something you experience in your heart, this shows that real faith doesn't have to follow one path or one image. For Celie, learning that God is everything and everywhere changes how she sees herself and the world. It brings her peace, freedom, and happiness, and that is when, as Shug says, she finally "finds God."

As the story goes on, Celie's idea of God begins to change and as a result, her character changes too along with the course of events, especially, after she meets Shug Avery. The latter helps her understand that God is not just a man in the sky. Shug tells her that God is everywhere; in nature, in people, in love, and in beauty. This is a different non-conventional image of God that starts to emerge when Shug tells her that God is not just a man, and definitely not just a white man. Shug says that God is everything, He/She/It can be found in flowers, trees, music, laughter, and freedom. She tells Celie that God wants people to enjoy life, not just suffer in silence. This new idea makes Celie feel stronger and more free. She does not feel small and scared anymore. She starts to believe that God is inside her, not above her.

This new way of thinking gives Celie strength. She stops writing to a distant God and starts writing to her sister Nettie instead. This change shows that Celie is beginning to believe in herself and in life again, so the expression "Dear God," is not just the start of a letter, it is the start of Celie's journey with religion, pain, and finally, spiritual freedom. She finally starts

to rebel against the image of God. She begins to see God as genderless and race less, a more universal being who wants humans to enjoy all the blessings of life. Celie's character alters many changes along with the course of events. "I'm pore, I'm black, I may be ugly and can't cook, a voice say to everything listening. But I'm here." (Walker,1982, p.102). This shows a big change in Celie. For the first time, she speaks with strength and pride, even though she knows she has been treated badly and made to feel worthless. She is not just writing to God anymore, she is speaking to the world, to herself, and to something bigger. This shows that her spirituality is growing stronger. She believed she had to suffer quietly and only speak to God. But now, her belief is different. She is starting to see her own value and power. Even if she is poor, black, and not treated with love, she realizes: she exists, and that is important. Saying "But I'm here" means she is alive, she has survived, and she matters. "Here's the thing, say Shug. The thing I believe. God is inside you and inside everybody else. You come into the world with God. But only them that search for it inside find it," (Walker, 1982, p.98), before this, Celie thought God was far away, like an old white man watching her and judging her. That idea made her feel small, guilty, and alone. But Shug's words show a new kind of personal and peaceful spirituality. She says that everyone is born with God inside them. That means God is part of you, your spirit, your joy, and your life.

This moment is important because it changes Celie's faith. She no longer has to be afraid or ashamed in front of a strict God. Instead, she can feel free to enjoy life, to love herself, and to find beauty in the world. Shug teaches her that God is love, creativity, and freedom, not fear and silence. This quote is a turning point in the novel. It helps Celie grow stronger and more confident. She starts to believe that she is good enough, just as she is, and that is what real faith means to her now. "God ain't a he or a she, but a It." (Walker,1982, p.98) This sentence shows a big change in how Celie can understand religion.

But Shug challenges this view. She says that God is not male or female, but something much bigger, a spirit, a force, a presence. By saying “God is an It,” Shug is not being disrespectful. She is helping Celie understand that God is not limited by human shapes, ideas, or gender roles. God is not a man sitting on a throne. God can be in the color purple of a flower in a song, in laughter, in love, or in the wind. God is everywhere and in everything, and that includes Celie.

This idea is powerful because it gives Celie a new kind of spiritual freedom. Before, religion was something that controlled her, it made her stay silent, accept pain, and feel unworthy. But Shug’s vision of God helps Celie to see religion differently. Now, she understands that she does not have to be afraid of God. She doesn’t have to pray to a male figure who reminds her of the men who hurt her. Instead, she can feel God around her and she believed she had to suffer quietly and obey in order to be good. God, in that sense, was far away, powerful, judging, and disconnected from her daily life. But by this point in the story, Celie has grown. She has listened to Shug Avery’s vision of God, not as a man in the sky, but as something bigger, more loving, and more connected to the world. Shug taught her that God is everything, not just a figure to fear or pray to. Celie takes this idea and makes it her own. Now, she no longer writes to a God she does not understand. Instead, she writes to the stars, the trees, the sky, the people, and everything. She sees all life as sacred, by saying “Dear Everything. Dear God,” she shows that for her, God and Everything are the same. She has found God in the beauty of the world, not in a church, not in a book, and not in the image of a man, but in everything that lives and breathes. Celie says, “I believe God is everything... everything that is or ever was or ever will be.” (Walker, 1982, p.98). This quote shows the moment when Celie truly changes the way she understands God and religion. At the beginning of the novel, Celie sees God as a powerful male figure, someone who watches from above and judges everything she does. Because of this image, Celie feels afraid, small, and

unworthy. She never questions this view until Shug Avery starts to talk to her about a different kind of God.

Celie sees that the world is full of beautiful things, the sky, flowers, music, friendship, and she understands that these are God's way of giving us joy. This is a very deep idea: that God wants us to enjoy life, not just follow rules. It means Celie now sees God as loving and generous, not as harsh and punishing. This quote shows that religion for her has become a celebration of life, not a burden. "I don't write to God no more, I write to you." (Walker, 1982, p.97). Here, Celie tells us that her faith and in her emotional life changed. From the beginning of the story, Celie writes letters to God because she has no one else to talk to. She is alone and afraid, and she believes that only God is listening. But over time, as she grows and changes, she starts to question whether God is really helping her. She feels like she is writing into the dark, with no response.

So instead, she begins writing to Nettie, her sister. This is a powerful shift. It shows that Celie is now looking for real, human connection, not just spiritual hope. She wants love, support, and understanding from someone who knows her and loves her. Writing to Nettie also means Celie is beginning to trust herself and others more. She is stepping out of silence and fear, and into real relationships and self-worth. This marks the starting point of Celie's religious journey. She begins with a picture of God that makes her feel powerless. But by the end of the book, she understands that real faith is personal, peaceful, and full of love, not fear.

Celie feels very angry and hopeless. She has spent her whole life suffering, she has been abused, ignored, and made to feel worthless. She has prayed and written letters to God, but nothing has changed. In this line, Celie expresses the pain of feeling invisible and forgotten, especially as a Black woman in a racist and sexist world. "If God ever listen to a poor colored woman the world would be a different place."(Walker, 1982, p.97).She says that

if God actually listened to women like her, the world would be better, kinder, fairer, more loving. This quote shows Celie's disappointment with the traditional image of God. She feels that the God she was taught to believe in doesn't care about people like her, people who are poor, female, and Black. This moment helps explain why Celie begins to reject the old religious ideas and starts looking for a new kind of spirituality, one that includes her and sees her as valuable. "I think it pisses God off if you walk by the color purple in a field somewhere and don't notice it." (Walker, 1982, p.98). Shug Avery explains to Celie that noticing beauty is part of honoring God. The color purple, a beautiful, vibrant color in nature, becomes a symbol of joy, beauty, and life. Shug believes that God creates beauty to be enjoyed, and when people ignore it, it is like ignoring a gift from God.

This is very different from the way Celie used to think about religion. Before, she believed religion was about following strict rules, staying quiet, and avoiding pleasure. Now, she is learning that enjoying life, nature, and beauty is not wrong, it is actually a way of connecting with God. It also shows how Celie's spirituality has become more free, natural, and joyful. Instead of seeing worship as something done in church, she now sees that noticing a flower, smiling, feeling peace, all of that is a kind of prayer. This is a very important moment, because it teaches Celie that God is not just about punishment or power, but about love, creation, and joy. "God love all them feelings. That's some of the best stuff God did. And when you know God love 'em you enjoy 'em a lot more." (Walker, 1982, p.97). Shug helps Celie understand that feelings and pleasures, like love, laughter, desire, and even sadness, are not sins. Celie grew up in a world that told her to feel guilty about enjoying anything. She believed that emotions and pleasure were dangerous, especially for women. But now she is learning that God created those feelings, and loving them is part of loving life, She says, "That's some of the best stuff God did," meaning that emotions are not something to hide or be ashamed of. They are part of what makes life meaningful. When Celie learns that God loves

emotions, she starts to enjoy her life more deeply and without fear. She understands that being alive and feeling things, even desire, joy, and sadness, is holy. This is another big shift in Celie's spiritual journey. She goes from thinking she has to suffer to be good, to believing that she can celebrate life and still be close to God. Her faith becomes more personal, more joyful, and much more loving.

In Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, religion occupies a central place in the development of the narrative. The novel illustrates how conventional religious beliefs are frequently used to justify silence and submission, especially for women like Celie. However, as the story progresses, Walker presents an alternative view of faith, one that is more personal, spiritual, and connected to nature and human relationships. In this way, the novel suggests that genuine religion is not about rigid authority but about inner strength, resilience, and the possibility of self-liberation.

2. Religion in the Movie

This section sets out to demonstrate how Blitz Bazawule invents his own conception of religion through a mix of music, visual metaphor, and character-driven narrative in *The Color Purple* (2023). Bazawule helps the audience deeply understand how Celie's view of religion changes over time. He shows that religion is not just strict rules from the church, but also something personal that grows and changes inside a person. Celie's faith is shaped by the pain she has lived through, her strength to keep going, and the support she finds in others. Through surreal music sequences, passionately performed songs, and affecting visuals, the movie makes us see how faith transforms from a means of control into a means of hope.

First, the film begins in Georgia in 1909, with sisters Celie and Nettie joining the rest of the town for Sunday church, where they sing "Mysterious Ways."



Figure 01 : The opening Sequence in The Color Purple 2023(03 :04)

Here, in a festive and bustling street scene, the people are out and about clapping hands and singing: “The Lord moves in mysterious ways.” This means that the church is more than just a place to pray.

It is also a place that shows both good and bad sides of religion. The church is small and simple, with wooden benches and plain windows that let the sunlight in. This shows that even though the people are poor, they still have strong faith and culture. Bazawule mixes visuals and music to show both comfort and pain, borrowing ideas from the book. Also, we see that everyone wears their nicest clothes to church, even if they do not have enough money to look strong and proud, even when life is very hard. The director wants us to see how the community keeps up their image, even while they are hurting inside. The song “Mysterious Ways” is also very meaningful. The people sing together using call-and-response and clapping, which are common in black churches. This makes the scene feel warm, joyful, and full of unity. But at the same time, Celie is in pain and taken out of the church because she is in labor. This shows a sad truth: the community is happy and singing, but they do not notice or help Celie.



Figure 02 : Celie in the church in The Color Purple (2023, 4 :33)

Through this scene, the choir praises God while referring to well-known Bible stories, such as “When the King threw Daniel into the lion’s den” and “When God saw the wicked,” making reference to the story of Noah. These stories remind the audience that even when things seem bad or hopeless, God might still be working behind the scenes to bring something good. That’s why

the people sing, “God works in mysterious ways.” At this moment in the film (Figure 2, 4:33), Celie is sitting in a church. Even though the room is full of people singing and praising God, she looks serious, distant, and alone. This is important because it shows how disconnected she feels, not just from the people around her, but also from the idea of God. Moreover, the way this scene is filmed helps us understand how Celie feels in the inside. The camera uses a technique called “shallow depth of field”, which means that only Celie is shown clearly, while the people around her appear blurry. This makes her stand out and look alone, even though she is sitting in a crowded church.

This visual technique is very important. In the book, we understand Celie’s deep thoughts and feelings because she writes private letters to God. Those letters let us hear her voice directly. But in the movie, there are no letters we can read, so the director has to show Celie’s emotions in a different way. By making her look alone in the middle of many people, the film shows her inner loneliness, how she feels disconnected from everyone else, including God. This is called *mise-en-scène*, which means, everything that appears in the frame (like where people sit, how they are dressed, the lighting, and the camera focus), all these things work together to show how Celie feels without using any words. This contrast tells us that religion, at this point in the story, is not comforting for her. It is something that others celebrate, but she does not fully feel part of. The church should be a place of healing, but for Celie, it reminds her of silence, shame, and judgment. This reflects how religion in her early life was used to control her, not to give her peace.

Additionally, Celie is wearing a simple white dress with ruffles. It looks modest and old-fashioned, compared to the brighter, more elegant clothes of others. This tells us about her place in society, she is poor, quiet, and seen as less important. The film uses costume to show social roles, just like the book explains how Celie feels looked down on by others. Her

clothing becomes a symbol of how religion and society keep her in a low position. Also, This scene is important because it shows where Celie begins. At this point, she still feels that God is far away and not listening. But later in the film, her idea of God changes.



Figure 03 : Celie’s spiritual awakening from The Color Purple (2023, 13 :05)

In this powerful scene from *The Color Purple* (2023), we see Celie standing near a waterfall with her arms slightly raised, her face lifted toward the sky, and her eyes closed. She is surrounded by natural beauty, and the subtitle reads : “♪ Oh, the Lord done send me a sign ♪.” This moment is very emotional and meaningful, as it shows Celie reaching out to God in her own way. Before she sings “Oh, the Lord done send me a sign,” something very important happens, Celie sees a little girl who turns out to be her own daughter, Olivia. Years earlier, Celie’s stepfather took Olivia away from her just after she gave birth. This moment in the movie, when Celie suddenly recognizes her long-lost child, is full of emotion. It is a turning point in the story and in Celie’s spiritual journey.

At first, Celie is shocked. She cannot believe her eyes. But when she realizes that the little girl in front of her is Olivia, the baby that was stolen from her. Her heart fills with joy. This overwhelming feeling of happiness makes her lift her head to the sky, close her eyes, and begin to sing. She says, “Oh, the Lord done send me a sign.” This song becomes her prayer. It replaces the letters she used to write to God in the novel. This is not just a random moment of singing. It comes from something very deep, a moment of personal healing and divine connection. Celie feels, for the first time, that God may have heard her pain. She believes that finding her daughter is not just a coincidence, but a sign that God is with her.

This scene is a great example of how the director Blitz Bazawule changes the way Celie's feelings and thoughts are shared with the audience. In the original novel by Alice Walker, we understand what Celie feels because she writes letters to God. Her letters are very personal, and they help us understand her sadness, hopes, and spiritual growth. However, Bazawule uses different tools, like camera angles, lighting, music, and nature to help us understand what is happening in her heart and mind.

First of all, the camera often looks up at Celie during this scene. This makes her look important and powerful. It feels like we are seeing her from the eyes of someone who respects her, maybe even from the point of view of God. This helps the audience understand that something special and spiritual is happening in this moment. Next, the lighting also plays an important role. Soft sunlight shines gently on Celie's face. This gives the scene a warm and peaceful feeling. It suggests that Celie is feeling hope again. Light is used in the film to show the times when Celie starts to feel loved, and free.

In addition, music is a very powerful tool in this scene. Instead of writing her emotions in a letter like she does in the book, Celie sings a song. The song works like a prayer. Through the words and melody, she expresses her joy and hope. The music is full of emotion, and it helps the audience feel exactly what Celie is feeling on the inside ; surprise, happiness, and the sense that she has finally received a sign from God.

Finally, the setting also helps tell the story. Celie is standing in nature, near a waterfall, with open space and fresh air around her. These natural elements help create a feeling of peace and freedom. Nature in this scene makes everything feel calmer and holy, as if God is close and watching over her.



Figure 04 : Celie's Spiritual Awakening in the Desert from The Color Purple (2023, 12 :15)

Figure four shows Celie standing in the middle of a desert-like landscape. This place looks dry, empty, and quiet. It reminds us of scenes in the Bible where people go into the desert to find answers or meet God. In many religious stories, the desert is a place where people are alone and face deep spiritual questions. So, by showing Celie in this kind of setting, the film is telling us that she is searching for meaning, for a sign from God, or for hope in her life. Celie wears a light pink dress, and this makes her stand out clearly from the people around her, who are wearing military uniforms. It shows that Celie is different, she is not part of this strict and powerful group. She is alone in her spiritual journey. This visual setup helps us understand that she feels isolated and maybe even judged by the world around her, but at the same time, it also shows that she is strong in her search for truth and connection with something greater.

Furthermore, the presence of soldiers plays a symbolic role in helping us understand a deeper meaning about faith, control, and personal freedom. At first, the soldiers may look like simple background characters, but in fact, they represent something much bigger. They stand for institutions, powerful systems like the church, the government, or society that often try to control how people behave and what they believe. These systems give rules and expect people to follow them without question. While the soldiers wear dark, matching uniforms, Celie's clothing shows her individuality and emotional openness. She is not part of the system, instead, she is someone who is beginning to think for herself and question what she has been told all her life. This scene helps us understand that religion is not always found in places of power. Sometimes, it is found in quiet moments of self-discovery. The soldiers symbolize the

voice of tradition, the part of society that says, “This is how things must be.” But Celie, standing among them, represents the voice of change. She is beginning to realize that she does not have to follow the beliefs that have been forced on her. She can find her own truth.

This contrast between the desert and the forest is very important. It tells that real faith does not only live in strict places like churches or under the control of powerful people. Instead, faith can grow in open spaces, in beauty, and in personal moments. In the forest, there are no rules or uniforms, just the sound of water, the feeling of sunlight, and the freedom to express what is in the heart. Celie’s prayer becomes a song, and her silence becomes a voice.

Moreover, the forest scene connects to a key message in Alice Walker’s novel that God can be found everywhere, not just in church. Walker writes that God is in the trees, the flowers, and even in the color purple. The film shows this by placing Celie in the middle of nature, where she finally begins to feel love, joy, and spiritual freedom. Through this scene, we see that nature itself becomes a church a place where Celie can pray, heal, and feel seen.



Figure N° 05 Spritual Awakening in nature : Celie and Shug in The Color Purple (2023, 57 :46-58 :30)

In this beautiful and emotional scene from *The Color Purple* (2023), Celie and Shug Avery are walking together in a wide, open meadow filled with colorful wildflowers. The sun is shining softly, and the flowers are gently moving in the breeze. The setting feels peaceful and free—far away from the dark rooms, painful memories, and strict rules that Celie has lived with for so long. Shug is wearing a bright, flowing outfit that matches the colorful surroundings, while Celie is more simply dressed but slowly begins to show signs of comfort and curiosity. Shug moves slowly, touching the flowers with care, smiling, and speaking in a

calm, warm voice. Celie follows her, listening closely. At first, Celie seems unsure, but as Shug continues talking about God and love, Celie begins to smile and walk more confidently. The two women laugh, walk side by side, and enjoy the beauty around them. This natural, colorful space becomes more than just a background; it turns into a kind of open-air church, where new ideas about God and faith are shared. Through this peaceful and beautiful environment, Bazawule visually expresses deep religious themes that were originally told through letters in Alice Walker's novel.



Figure N° 06 : Meadow of greace : Celie's First Step into spirutual freedom in The Color Purple (2023)

Furthermore, Shug's ideas about God are very different from what Celie has been taught. For Shug, God is not a man in the sky watching people and judging them. Instead, God is everywhere ; in nature, in beauty, in joy, and in our everyday lives. This is called pantheism, the belief that God is in everything. The meadow filled with wildflowers is a perfect place to talk about this. Surrounded by bright colors, sunshine, and gentle sounds, Shug shows Celie that feeling close to God does not have to happen in a church. It can happen anywhere, especially in places that bring peace and wonder.

The scene also shows us how religion and the body are connected. While many religious traditions focus on sin, guilt, and punishment, Shug teaches something different. She touches the flowers, walks slowly through the meadow, and invites Celie to do the same. Shug's movements are like a silent prayer, and the way she uses her body to express faith is part of what makes her message so powerful.

Moreover, Shug's role in Celie's life is very special. She is not just a friend; she is a kind of spiritual guide or teacher. We could even say she is an "incarnational theologian", someone who teaches about God not by reading books or giving sermons, but by living, feeling, and experiencing the world. She teaches Celie that God is not only in words or rules but also in feelings of joy, love, and beauty. As Shug helps Celie walk through the meadow and shows her the flowers, she is also helping her walk toward a new kind of faith.

This healing is very important. Celie has gone through so much pain and abuse in her life. The religion she grew up with made her feel small, ashamed, and afraid. But Shug's view of spirituality is different. She believes that real faith should make people feel better about themselves. It should help them feel strong, free, and full of life.



Figure N° 07 : Celie's Big questions about God in The Color Purple (2023)

However, this becomes even more clear in a powerful moment of emotional truth. Surrounded by beauty, Celie finally asks the questions that have been troubling her for a long time : “Then why he take my babies ?” and “Why he take my Nettie ?” These questions are full of pain and confusion. Celie is not just asking about life or about God in general, she is asking why the people she loves most, her children and her sister, were taken away from her. These questions come from a place of deep hurt and show how religion, as she learned it before, could not give her comfort or answers. She feels as if God is in control of everything, then maybe He is the one who caused her pain.

Then Shug says something that changes everything: “Sounds like men did that. Not God.” This sentence is simple but very strong. It helps Celie see that maybe God did not take her children or her sister. Maybe it was the actions of people, especially men in power, who hurt her. This helps Celie understand that her pain was not caused by God, but by humans who used power in a wrong way like her stepfather Alphonso. It shows that we do not have to blame God for all the bad things that happen. Sometimes, people cause pain and suffering, and God is not the one doing it. This idea gives Celie a new way to think about God. It also helps her feel that she can believe in a good and loving God without accepting the pain others caused her. Additionally, Shug is also teaching her that believing in justice, kindness, and beauty is not turning away from God. It is getting closer to the true God.

In this moment, Shug also shows us a different kind of power. It is not the power of control or punishment. It is the power of love, freedom, and beauty. This power is everywhere in the natural world; in flowers, in sunlight, in kindness. And because it is in nature, it is available to everyone. You don't need to go to a church or follow strict rules to find it. The film shows all of this through simple things: Celie's voice, her face, the way she looks at Shug, and the way she sees the flowers. These elements help the audience understand that Celie is starting a new path. She is beginning to see God not as someone who hurts her, but as someone who wants her to feel joy and love.

In another powerful moment in *The Color Purple* (2023), we witness a quiet but deeply meaningful conversation between Sofia and Celie. This scene happens later in the film, when Sofia looks at Celie and says, "But you came and seen about me every week" and "That's how I knows there's a God. 'Cause he's living in you." These simple words show us a new and very touching way to think about God and religion. This moment does not take place



in a church or during a prayer. Instead, it happens in a normal setting between two women who have shared pain and love.

Figure N° 08 : The Color Purple (2023, 1 :34 :18), Sofia's faith through Celie's love

Through a transmedial study, we understand that while the book used letters to explore feelings and thoughts, the film shows these feelings through actions, images, and short but powerful dialogues. Sofia's words are full of meaning. Even though she has suffered a lot, being put in jail, forced to work hard, and treated unfairly, she still finds hope. But this hope does not come from sermons or traditional prayers, it comes from Celie's regular visits, from her friendship and love.

Sofia is a strong woman, known for standing up for herself. But here, we see a softer side of her. She is thankful. She knows that without Celie's love, she may have lost her faith. Her gratitude is deep, and she uses religious words to express it. She says that she sees God in Celie. This means that God's love can be shown through the kind actions of other people. Sofia's words also help Celie see herself in a new way. For a long time, Celie felt worthless and unloved. But now, she sees that someone believes she carries something good inside her. Sofia's words give Celie strength. They show her that even though she has suffered, she still has love to give, and that love makes her powerful.



Figure N° 09 : Thankful and Free : Celie's spiritual triumph in The Color Purple (2023, 2 :01 :05)

In this sequence, Celie standing with her arms

raised toward the sky. She is smiling, and her whole body shows joy and peace. This scene is very important because it shows us that Celie has completed her journey of faith. She is no longer the scared and quiet girl from the beginning of the story. Now, she is strong, free, and full of life. We hear Celie sing, “And I'm thankful for every day that I'm given.” This line is not just about being happy, it shows us that Celie now sees every day as a gift. Her singing is like a prayer of thanks, showing that she has found peace with herself and with God. Furthermore, the focus is on her actions and expressions. In the musical, songs help us understand her feelings. Now, all of these forms come together. Her song, her smile, and her raised hands tell us the same thing as her letters did : she has found her own way to believe.

Also, the way the director uses the camera in this scene helps us feel what Celie is feeling. We see her from a low angle, which makes her look powerful. Most importantly, this scene shows that Celie has created her own kind of religion. It is not the harsh and punishing religion she was taught when she was younger. Now, her faith is about love, beauty, and freedom. She sees God in nature, in people, and in everyday life. Her raised arms show that she is open to the world and thankful for everything.

After exploring Celie’s spiritual growth, the film turns its focus to another powerful moment of faith and reconciliation, Shug Avery’s return to the church and her father. This scene marks a very important turning point in Shug’s own relationship with religion. At first, Shug was pushed away from the church. She was judged for how she lived and was not accepted by her own father, who was a preacher. But in this scene, we see that change is possible.



Figure N°10 : The symbol of The Church in The Color Purple (2023, 2 :02 :44)

The setting in this scene is very important because it helps us understand the idea of religion in *The Color Purple*. First, we see a white church. It is shown with soft sunlight and surrounded by tall trees with Spanish moss. This makes the church look calm, peaceful, and holy. The white color of the church stands for traditional religion. This is the kind of religion that once judged and rejected Shug Avery because of how she lived.

However, the warm sunlight and the beauty of nature around the church change how we feel about it. Instead of feeling cold or strict, the church now feels more open and welcoming. This shows that something new is happening. It means that religion can also be kind, gentle, and full of hope.

In addition, the trees and sunlight make the place feel like it belongs to everyone, not just those who follow strict rules. This helps us see that religion can change. It does not always have to punish or exclude people. Instead, it can help people feel loved, accepted, and healed.



Figure N°11 : Redemption and Return ; Shug Avery's Homecoming in The Color Purple (2023,2 :03 :04)

However, in this scene, we see a different Shug. She steps into the church with confidence. She is no longer afraid or ashamed. Instead, she is ready to speak and to be heard. When she says, “Speak, Lord!” she is opening herself to God in her own way. It is a powerful moment that shows her new connection with faith.



Figure N°12 : Speak, lord ; Shug Avery's voice and transformation in The Color Purple (2023, 2 :03 :27)

Shug's personality has always been bold, honest, and loving. She believes in living with joy, music, and freedom. In the past, this way of life was not accepted by the church. But in this scene, she brings her blues music into the church. She sings a song that is full of emotion and truth. The same voice that was once judged is now filling the holy space. Shug is showing everyone that music from real life, like blues, can also be holy. She shows that God is not only found in church songs, but also in songs about real human feelings, love, sadness, joy, and hope. Her singing is more than just a song ; it becomes a prayer from the heart. Also, Shug's feelings are told her voice, the camera, the lighting, and her face expressions.

In the final part of Shug Avery's spiritual journey, we see her father's powerful change of heart. This scene takes place in the church, where Shug sings from her heart and her father watches with emotion. At first, he is standing still, showing no feelings, but as Shug continues to sing, we see his face slowly change. He begins to cry. These tears show more than sadness.

Furthermore, Shug's father is a preacher. For many years, he has talked about God's love, but he refused to show that same love to his own daughter. He judged her for her choices and turned her away. But now, as he watches her sing with honesty and faith, something changes inside him. The wall between them starts to fall.



Figure N° 13 : Love and Forgiveness ; Shug Avery and her father in The Color Purple (2023, 2 :04 :58)

Moreover, the film uses simple images to show this change. Her father moves from being in control to becoming soft and emotional. He stops being only a preacher and becomes a father again.

This is a big message in the movie that religion should be about love, not judgment. It shows that real faith includes forgiveness and seeing the good in others.

When her father finally hugs Shug, it is a moment full of meaning. It is not just a hug between a parent and child, but it is a symbol of healing. This sequence shows that love has won over rules. Their closeness shows that people can grow, change, and come back together.

Also, this moment reflects something bigger about black religious traditions. For a long time, people have struggled with rules in the church about what is right and wrong, especially when it comes to women and music. But this film shows that joy, music, and emotion are all part of true faith. Shug's music, once seen as bad, becomes holy.

In both *The Color Purple* and its 2023 film adaptation, religion emerges as a central force that shapes lives and relationships. While traditional faith often appears as a tool of oppression, both works also reveal its potential to inspire resilience, hope, and spiritual freedom. Ultimately, they suggest that true empowerment comes not from imposed doctrines but from a personal, redefined sense of faith.

V. General Conclusion

Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* 1982 and its 2023 film adaptation are two remarkable artistic productions that deal with the realities of black women's lives in early twentieth-century America. Both the novel and the film explore the oppressive social systems of racism, patriarchy that marginalize African American women, while at the same time highlighting their strength, resilience, and desire for liberation. Walker and the film directors succeeded in denouncing these unjust systems and in voicing the concerns of women who have long been silenced. Using the transmedial theory as our theoretical framework, we have examined how the transition from literature to film affects the portrayal of the central themes of education, marriage, and religion.

In the first chapter, we analyzed the themes of education and marriage. We have shown how the novel presents education not only as formal schooling but also as self-awareness, writing, reading, and learning from others, especially other women. In both the novel and the film, education presents a bridge toward freedom and empowerment for Celie. As for marriage, the story portrays it as a structure rooted in male dominance and control. Celie, like many women of her time, is treated as property rather than a partner. However, throughout the narrative, she begins to reject this model of marriage and seeks emotional and financial independence. These aspects are effectively illustrated in the film through visual storytelling, musical moments, and expressive performances that emphasize Celie's growth and resistance.

The second chapter focused on religion, which plays a significant role in Celie's journey. At the beginning, Celie writes letters to a traditional, patriarchal God, shaped by the Christian church and societal expectations. However, under the influence of Shug Avery, Celie begins to rethink her spiritual beliefs. She discovers a personal and inclusive vision of God, one that

embraces nature, joy, and love. The film adaptation emphasizes this spiritual transformation through powerful visual metaphors, such as light and landscape, and by giving more emotional weight to key conversations between Celie and Shug. Religion, therefore, moves from being a tool of submission to a source of inner freedom and peace.

The findings of our dissertation demonstrate that *The Color Purple*, both in its literary and cinematic forms, provides a critical reflection on the lived experiences of black women and their struggles for dignity, identity, and voice. Although the novel and the film belong to different mediums and historical contexts, they remain faithful to the core message of resistance, transformation, and hope. Our study shows how transmedial storytelling can enrich our understanding of major social issues by bringing different dimensions, visual, musical, and emotional to the same narrative.

We also believe that our work opens the way for further research. While our analysis has focused on the notions of education, marriage, and religion, the novel and film address many other themes such as sisterhood, abuse, racism, sexuality, and economic independence. Future students may explore *The Color Purple* through other theoretical lenses such as Feminism, Postcolonialism, Queer theory, or Black Womanism. The richness of Walker's work, as well as the depth of its adaptation, ensures that this topic will continue to be a powerful and relevant field of literary and cinematic exploration.

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