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**Spirituality and Self-Healing in Alice  
Walker's *The Color Purple***

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the Requirement for an M.A. Degree in English Literature and Civilization

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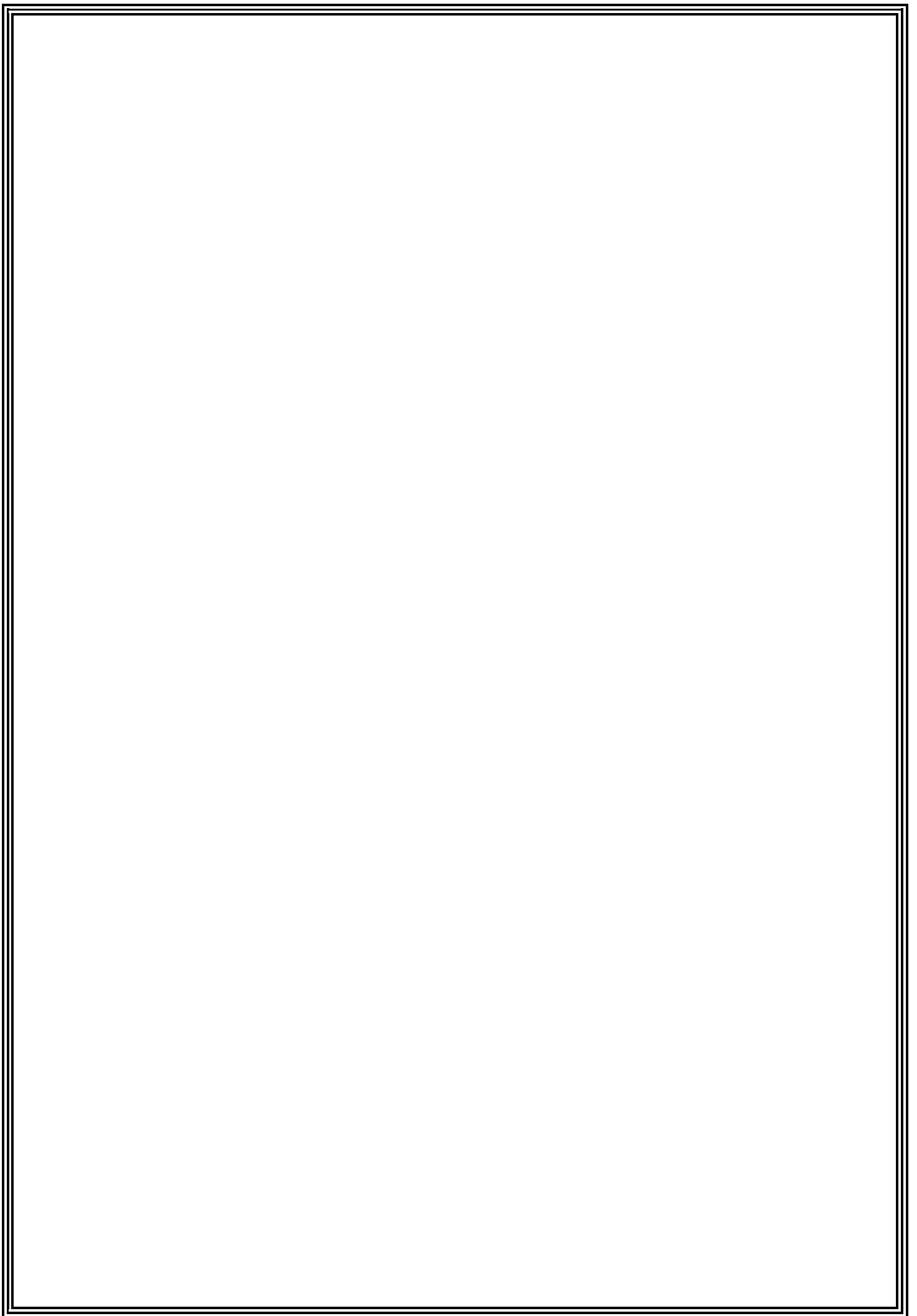
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## Abstract

Alice Walker's famous epistolary novel *The Color Purple* is one of her most widely known literary contributions that highlight many sensitive themes as female oppression, racism and gender roles. This research work is explicitly devoted to the quest of spirituality, religion and the representation God's image in the novel. It focuses on the great role of spirituality in the lives of female characters and in their achievement of self-healing, and declaims walker's very own expression and demonstration of the divine that identifies it as her novel's source of inspiration. Moreover, this study is dedicated to the black females' spiritual survival as it aims to examine a journey from a traditional Christian faith to a general spiritual version of the divine. It also shows to what extent sisterhood and female connection have an impact on Walker's protagonist's self-awakening as she gains her spiritual growth and freedom from the women around her. At the end of the novel, she becomes a liberated soul, a confident, happy and independent woman after getting her new vision of God. All this is shown through using a postmodernist perspective in reference to Lois Tyson's book *Critical Theory Today*.

**Key words:** spirituality, religion, image of God, self-healing, black female.

## Dedication

Dear woman,

Sometimes you will be too much pretty, too much strong, too much sensitive, too much of everything, that can make your pain feel more strong of you. Sometimes you will be too much lonely, too much sad, and too much weak, that your wounds feel more powerful of you

But I need you to know that you do not need to be ashamed of your broken soul because from the womb of suffering, a female is born.

To every soul that liberate itself,

To every woman who did not give up and still stand staunch,

To every voice that is not heard,

This work is dedicated to you!

To the greatest example of self-power,

To my Mother.

## **Acknowledgment**

Before everything else, Thanks to “ALLAH”, who is the source of wisdom, for giving me the ability and chance to complete this work.

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I would like to thank my lovely parents and brothers for always supporting and believing in me.

A great thanks to my inspiration's source -my mother- for all I am today, is her love that showed me the way.

Thanks to my permanent companion and soul mate for always being there every time I needed him and for all my lovely friends and teachers.

After all, a special thanks to myself because without me I could not be anything.

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*“Look closely at the present you are constructing: it should look like the future  
You are dreaming.”*

*Alice Walker.*



# **General Introduction**

## General Introduction

Throughout the last several decades, the subject of spirituality has come to the foreground of public and expert awareness. The word spirituality is used to describe an attitude towards religion that emphasizes an inner experience of deity, as it encompasses all aspects of being human and is a means of experiencing life. Spirituality can be introduced as an ability to establish a meaningful relationship between the inner self, others and the divine through faith, hope and love. It can also be related to an inner life, which is deeply related with religious forms or with humanistic psychology for reaching one's greatest potential, as religion is in fact a form that spirituality takes in practice.

Barbara Leonard in her article entitled "Introduction to Spirituality" notes that although spirituality may include some traditional religious beliefs and practices, it is a much broader concept that also includes nonreligious beliefs and expressions. Today's multicultural society with its many secular and religious beliefs requires spiritual care that respects the integrity of different faith communities as well as that of individuals outside the faith communities (5). yet in literature, different understandings of spirituality in standard terms are given and the variances in definition concerning the respect to the notion of spirituality and religion are examined.

Some researchers presented various categorizations of spirituality as some of them reported that spirituality includes superficial and deep expressions. Others examined the existence of two other forms of spirituality as they claim that there is religious spirituality and aesthetic spirituality. The religious one can include divine

truth, belief in miracles and prayers; it aims to find the truth, while the aesthetic one is related to honesty, integrity and harmony.

Actually there are several definitions and interpretations of spirituality. It is reflected in everyday life as well as in disciplines ranging from philosophy and popular literature to psychotherapy, and health psychology. This concept can also be interpreted in connection with the transcendence of self and search for the real meaning of life. While nobody has had the option to give an all around acknowledged meaning of spirituality, scientists and scholars concur that it is a multidimensional wonder.

Ones of the major themes that are common in several literary works are spirituality, religion and self-healing, and the worldwide read novel *The Color Purple* which is written by the feminist Alice Walker in 1982 is the best exemplary work that highlights these topics.

Walker is an African American feminist author whose novels depict African women struggling against an oppressive society. She touches upon issues such as sexual assault, racism, violence, religion, gender role, feminism, spirituality, self-esteem and freedom. Although *The Color Purple* is a work of fiction and besides the fact that this work was controversial, walker's novel describes events that mirror the United States society in the time the story takes place.

In fact, walker's *The Color purple* celebrates women's fight against the patriarchal society that imprisoned them. Her works shape the role of the women of color in African American culture and history. The novel is written in epistolary form, and its themes mirror the society of the early twentieth century, also Alice Walker has portrayed her life experience as a child, containing pain, violence and slavery in the lives of her female characters. In other words, her characters are the

voice of her harsh experience that left a deep mark in her soul and mind. *The Color Purple* is an uplifting triumph of human spirit over prejudice. It is filled with colorful characters that many can relate to in this world.

Alice Walker tells a story of a poor, uneducated, oppressed black female of fourteen years old who fought an abusive father and more abusive husband, yet who overcame all hardships and bad circumstances and succeeded at the end to reach her self-esteem, to be independent, to heal her soul, and to rise her voice to say: “yes, I’m poor, I’m black, I may be ugly and I can’t cook.... but I’m here” (walker,205). In short, this epistolary novel depicts the story of a self-healing journey of an afro-American woman.

*The Color Purple* got many compliments and critics at the same time from major analysts and pundits. MCKever- Floyd, Preston L declares in 2007 in the article entitled: “Tell nobody but God: The Theme of Transformation in The Color Purple” that religion’s transformation is often paradoxical, ranging from self-denying to self-asserting, world asserting to world invalidating. Celie’s world is a microcosm of this paradox in *The Color Purple* (426-33).

As indicated by Ang in 2001, in the most recent years of the 20th century, the Western world turned out to be increasingly more worried about issues of social, political and sex correspondence and brought about the politicization of race and nationality as well as an expanded political awareness and activism of the individuals who ended up underestimated and victimized based on their race, sexual direction, sex or identity (177).

Additionally, Selzer Linda claims in her article in 1995 entitled “Race and Domesticity in The Color Purple” that the text’s ability to expose sexual oppression

seems to come at the expense of its ability to analyze issues of race, class, and Walker's perspective's of her narrations and characters (67-70).

"Women in Literature: Reading Through The learns of Gender" is an article written by Jerilyn Fisher and Ellen S. Siber in 2003 in which they examine literary representations of femininity and masculinity, in addition to determining the fate of the characters as they navigate the complex psychic and social worlds they inhabit.

Gay Alden Wilentz in his book entitled *Healing Narratives: Women Writers Curing Culture Disease* in 2000 explores the relationship between culture and health. He states that the works of the women writers like Tom Cade Bambara, Erna Broder, Keli Hulme, Walker and Marmon Silko, trace the narrative and structural similarities of a the main characters moving from a state of a mental or physical disease towards wellness through reconnection with their cultural traditions.

Sigrun Tinna Sveinsdottir highlights In *breaking the silence. The Search for a Voice in Alice Walker's The Color Purple* in 2012 how Celie and other women in the novel are exposed to silence, what are the silencing forces and how they overcome the difficulties this silence poses.

Moreover, Dror Abend-David states in 1999 in "The Occupational Hazard: The Loss of Historical Context in Twentieth-Century Feminist Readings" that the essentialness isn't such a great amount in the characteristics that God is denied as in the characteristics that God is at long last granted. The disengagement among individuals and the world is a significant issue. This separation underlies and propels the novel's structure that depends on demonstrating how individuals can improve when they request a caring God just as a spot on the planet. Despite the customized form of God and the universe that Celie in the long run creates, it turns out to be certain that the characters need a wellspring of affection and direction in their life

that awards them harmony with their picked jobs as opposed to looking for a spot inside society's thin limits (17).

Anna Clark declares in her review about the novel in 2009 that Walker in this story has accomplished a rare thing as she wrote an epistolary novel without veering from preciousness, Clark also depicts the change in Celie's character which cannot be watched but can be felt in the beat and rhythm of Celie's words.

The last article that is reviewed is entitled "Female Solidarity in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*" by Tantitanir in 2017. In this paper, the image of individuals of color in a male-commanded world in the novel plays a significant role in the public arena. Alice Walker as the author of *The Color Purple* depicts how individuals of color particularly ladies discover challenges to get by in their life. This article is helpful to my research on account of how individuals of color in their condition battle to get a legitimate life (117-23).

Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* is an example of the spiritual survival of the black people especially the black women. After considering these preliminary readings that deal with the essence of the subject, I want to extend my knowledge on the subject of spirituality in literature by conducting a research on its impact on self-healing in *The Color Purple*, using a post-modernist perspective.

This study tends to analyze the notion of spirituality and its major impact on the character's success to heal themselves and overcome their bad experiences and hard life conditions, it also reveals Walker's vision of God and spirituality in the story through the analysis of the main characters. In other ways, this research aims to put attention on how could the characters, especially black female characters, redefine and reach their own vision of spirituality and God, and to what extent did this help them to heal themselves.

There are numerous reasons that can justify my choice to do this research, the first one is the first is identified with portrayal and characterization in the novel as the characters' mental profundity or psychological depth is uncovered. A major example is the female hero of the story, Celie, who is poor and uneducated, she defies an injurious dad and a more oppressive husband, yet she opposes and resists all the difficulties with the expectation of reuniting again with her sister Nettie, without forgetting the other female characters in the novel who left a major trace in the world of Afro-American females.

The second reason is related to the plot of *The Color Purple* book; as the novel is written in an epistolary form, it is written as a series of documents and letters. This way allows Celie to speak for herself and she also gets to structure her identity and sense of self by writing. The technique also allows Walker to show the development of events through years with mentioning the major hardships that the characters endure and how they overcome life obstacles.

Another reason is related to the themes and the major subjects and ideas that are depicted in the novel. The book is full of sensitive themes as Walker dealt with sexism, oppression, gender equality and black women's self journey to self identity, freedom and self-healing by redefining their views about spirituality and God.

Alice Walker's novel *The Color Purple* has been lauded as one of the greatest works of literature, as such, it has also produced criticism. There has been an exhaustive debate about the major themes in *The Color Purple*, specifically about the notion of spirituality, God, self-esteem journey. The aim of this research paper is to clarify how the characters succeed to heal themselves through their new view of spirituality.

To understand well the precedent concepts and all the aspects that pertain to this subject, it is necessary to put them in context and recognize the link between the problems related to it, thus, some questions arise: How do the characters manage to heal themselves through spirituality? According to Walker, how can we explain and redefine “God”, religion and the notion of spirituality? What led the Afro-American woman to achieve her self-identity and freedom in *The Color Purple*?

In conducting this research, I am going to analyze Walker’s novel by using a post-modernist approach, showing how the characters succeed to heal themselves through spirituality and the importance this concept has in afro-American society. The method that I have chosen will be introduced in reference to specific principles of postmodern theory presented by Lois Tyson.

This research work is going to be divided into two chapters. The first chapter introduces the historical, socio-cultural and religious contexts of the novel and presents a short biography of Alice Walker. As an African American woman, she encountered the evils of a male centric society; she used writing as an outlet to her awful encounters and traumatic experiences and had the option to be free and to turn into a notable author. The chapter also unveils the approach in reference to a postmodernist perspective discussed in Lois Tyson’s *Critical Theory Today: A Friendly Useful Guid* ( Post-modern Literature).

The second chapter will be devoted to studying the main themes of the novel and explaining the concepts of God and spirituality with emphasizing the idea of redefining them from a postmodernist perspective. It also traces the evolution of the main characters, how they manage to heal themselves by focusing on the major role of spirituality in this achievement. And declaring how can men also be victims of their own system. Moreover, I will put emphasis on female solidarity, quilting and



black female relationships and their value in the self healing journey for the principle female characters.

## **Chapter I**

**A General Overview of Alice Walker's**

*The Color Purple*

## ***Chapitre 1 : A General Overview of Alice Walker's The Color Purple***

### **Introduction**

The first part of this chapter presents a broad view of *The Color Purple*'s historical and religion context, in addition to its social and cultural background, with emphasizing major events and facts that occurred during the story's time and place. Then the second part will discuss the major themes that the novel highlights, moreover, the third part will give an overview of the approach that will be applied in the second chapter in reference to Lois Tyson's explanation of postmodernism.

In The early ninetieth century, African-Americans who lived in the United States had experienced difficulties in their life. It occurred since they showed up in America. They confronted racism, bigotry and segregation for quite a long time. Therefore, they lost their freedom, basic liberties and human rights, particularly women.

African-American women confronted twofold suffering because of being black and being women. Their suffering was afflicted by the whites as well as by the African-American men's centric thoughts. It implies that ladies are more subordinate than men in the general public as well as in the family sphere.

Walker's story centers on the life of an African American woman who had overcome many challenges and obstacles and finds her inner peace and discovers satisfaction just as her own profound pathway. The events of *The Color Purple* take place in provincial Georgia between 1910-1940, it depicts celie's journey from being oppressed, abused, enslaved by religion and social aspects since she was persecuted by her step father and husband to end up more happy and more independent after succeeding to change her perception of her religion

and the way she sees life. All this through the help of some female characters in the story like Shug avery who helped her liberate her spirit from wrong beliefs and her body from sexual abuse, and Nettie her sister who made her realize the power of education, and Sofia the example of woman-rejection of oppression and dominance that made her realize her rights and values.

*The Color Purple* presents the society of the individuals of color, which is described by poverty, needness, work deficiency, oppression and persecution. Despite the fact that Walker's tale is a work of fiction, it expects to depict an exceptionally reasonable picture of the black's life in the mid twentieth century. The tale happens in the main portion of the twentieth century. Significant changes occurred throughout the entire existence of the United States during this time frame and the Southern states were going through critical turn of events. To arrive at a comprehension of this turn of events and the everyday environments of the individuals of color it is critical to investigate some historical events.

### **1-The Historical Context and Setting of *the Color Purple***

After 1915, monetary open doors in urban areas of the modern North urged numerous blacks to leave the South. Those that stayed kept on living isolated from white society. Schools and churches were isolated, just as lodging. There were not many open doors for blacks to set up themselves outside of sharecropping. During the time of the novel, isolation among blacks and whites was authorized lawfully to the point that blacks needed to sit in discreet places and be far from the whites.

The story's events take place when slavery was abolished yet the blacks' sufferings still exist as they faced many troubles with starting their new lives. At that point, numerous men would be victimized for the color of their skin, with no real way to fight back against any

unfair treatment by their oppressors. Accordingly, many took out their dissatisfaction on their spouses, who at that point confronted a “twofold separation”.

In *The Color Purple*, Sofia is defrauded by this social arrangement. When she shows disobedience to the white civic chairman’s wife, she is captured and given a solid prison sentence for her activities. Sofia’s story is the best example showed in the novel of black challenges to the dominance of the whites and blacks also. The trouble in relations between black men and women had its source in the white male-overwhelmed society. Inside white society, men were relied upon to control the family and had power over ladies. The black man, in contrast to his white partner, was mortified every day for the color of his skin. In disappointment, many black males turned their resentment towards women. The latter encountered the twofold abuse and oppression that Alice Walker investigates in the novel.

Lynching, murder by a mob, was predominant in the South from the 1880s to the 1930s. Celie's genuine dad had been lynched during the 1900s since he had set up a business that rivaled white organizations. Reprisal by lynching went unchallenged until the United States Congress attempted to pass an anti-lynching law in 1937. Southern representatives killed the bill by not letting it go to a vote in the Senate.

There were some words that circulated among blacks that black men should have everything white men have, including dominance over women. This fact is shown several times throughout the story. Moreover, the unfairness and inequity of that time provide a delightful environment for the growth of this unique story. The context of the novel’s composition is of great significance to female activists. This drove women activists as Alice Walker to coin the term “Womanism”, a strand of woman's rights which organizes the earnest needs of black women. It was in this unique situation in the USA in 1982, that Alice Walker presented her novel *The color Purple*.

## 2-The Socio-cultural Background of the novel

Alice Walker in her novel *The Color Purple*, addresses some significant African American cultural themes, furthermore, she deals with education and business. Starting with the economic context that is appeared in the novel, it is a way that shows how much the African American began to be involved in working in economic fields as some opportunities arose. Hence they started bossing in private enterprises.

This fact is seen in many characters of the novel, like Shug Avery, Celie's husband's love who works as a singer to be richer, and to achieve her dream of having a big house and new car. Another character that embodies this reality is Mr. Albert the husband of Walker's protagonist Celie, who has a big and enormous farm which is extensive for him. Almost all the characters are giving example of this economic aspect but Celie's economic richness will be achieved with her self-development, the novel permits us as readers to see how much black people can work hard despite white racism.

During the time of bigotry, educating slaves was totally unpermitted and banned, since some laws were proclaimed it illicit for a slave to go to school, due to the dread of whites of the possibility of blacks' rebellion, especially in South American societies, where the literated slaves were extremely requested in the slave community. However, this was not the situation in North American social orders, where the slaves' education was allowed. Yet in spite of the entirety of this, the subjugated blacks actually figured out how to peruse and compose. Therefore, in the nineteenth century, majority of them distributed what is designated "slave narratives". And here in this novel Nettie gives a great example of a woman's opportunity to be educated and become a missionary teacher.

In Alice Walker's novel, *The Color Purple*, the social community is represented through whites' prejudice and male dominance and strength, both blacks and whites. Furthermore, it had an extremely profound effect on the African Americans. However, the epic opposes and contradicts the New Right Movement and gives more liberal thoughts, that the author features in her book by demonstrating the protagonist's new vision of religion and God.

### **3-The Religious Context**

Alice Walker has recognized her own religious development as a significant effect on *The Color Purple* and has portrayed the novel as a philosophical and theological work which follows an excursion, attended by various chief characters, from traditional strict conviction to a more widespread profound mindfulness. The image of religion in the novel has been presented through Celie who writes letters to God telling him her suffering silently, as it was taught to her in the church. Nettie succeeded to escape those Christian beliefs and Shug seems to have the right version of religion perception. Moreover, the lessons of the church in the two nations are portrayed by the white Christian individuals, despite the fact that, in the African setting, they are conveyed by black evangelists. God is seen and perceived, in the two areas, as male and white and as a patriarchal figure with supreme position and force.

Christian patriarchy is the conviction that God has appointed a particular family request which must be followed. The husband leads, the wife obeys and the kids comply. This is viewed as the common request appointed by God. People have various tasks to carry out, the man as defender and supplier and the woman as career and home producer. Women must submit to male power, girls complying with their dads and spouses complying with their

husbands. The conviction is that both church and family thrive when God's made jobs are accomplished.

There exist numerous black writers and essayists who expressed important concerns in their writings, like Harriet Jacobs, Maria W. Stewart, Deborah Gray-White, Zora Neale Hurston, Alice Walker, Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison and various others. These ethnic minorities' researchers often underline in their works the importance of recuperating female fulfillment and self-affirmation as well as achieving sexual care. In their fiction, the female characters can change, progress and surpass desires in all aspects of life.

#### **4-Biography of Alice Walker**

The sum of Walker's books, short stories, papers, articles and poems are essentially based on issues of social correspondence, tackling especially the dilemma of African Americans, who bear the twofold abuse of bigotry, prejudice and sexism. Walker's works are enlivened by her conviction that writing, while it may not affect speedy political and social change, can report current realities of human suffering and help put the world destined for success. An admirer of non-white writers of earlier ages, especially Zora Neale Hurston, Walker struggled to bring Hurston's work, which were no longer underway and disregarded by aesthetic scientists, back to notable and essential affirmation. Like Zora Neale Hurston, Walker needed most importantly to depict the internal and profound characteristics of African Americans, who regardless of the various chances against them, sort out some way to survive, endure and blossom profoundly and significantly.



#### **4.1 Alice Walker's Birth and Childhood**

Alice Walker was born on February 9, 1944, in Eatonton, Georgia; she was the eighth offspring of Millie Lou and Willie Lee Walker. The couple wedded during the Great Depression and together persevered through an existence of sharecropping while at the same time bringing up their eight children. The Walker family endured and survived three huge periods of American history: the Great Depression, the Jim Crow time, and the Civil Rights Movement. Endurance, it appears, is only one worth that the Walkers had as their family legacy.

Walker started first grade at age four, a year sooner than anticipated, in light of the fact that her mother needed to help the Walker family and because there was none to care for her as a child. Walker joined the class of Miss Reynolds at East Putnam, a school that Walker's dad had helped with working up in 1948, with the desire that a strong guidance would shield energetic Walker from standing up to a future in which she would be constrained to work in the fields to support herself and her family. In the early years Alice was enthusiastic, at the age of eight when Alice joined her siblings in a game, she was accidentally shot in her eye by one of them. This event was particularly basic for the author. Walker disconnected herself from different persons since she was humiliated about her facial distortion and felt depressed so she pursued reading and composing.

In 1961, Walker won a full state award to Spellman College, Atlanta, where she was a student for a long time before moving to Sarah Lawrence College, New York. During this time, she ended up being involved in the Civil Rights Movement. While enthusiastic about these political exercises, Walker comprehended that the emphasis was on the rights and experiences of males, and this awakened her craving to

communicate a black female voice. In 1967, she married a white Jewish law firm partner, Mel Leventhal, with whom she had a baby girl, Rebecca, in 1969. Then Walker moved to California after separating in 1977.

#### **4-2 Walker's significant literary works**

Alice Walker had taken part of the literary world with several literary works. The first publication and distribution of Walker was a collection of poems, entitled *Once* (1968). It was moved generally by the Civil Rights Movement and not completely by a late spring that Walker spent in Africa, anyway this was in like way a loathsome period during which she got pregnant and had an abortion. The experience left her depressed, and composing these poems formed a part of her rebirth cycle. She composed *Good Night Willie Lee, I'll See You in the morning* (1979); *Horses Make a Landscape Look More Beautiful* (1984); *Her Blue Body Everything We Know* (1990); and *Absolute Trust in the Goodness of the Earth* (2003).

The first novel written by Walker, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, was published in 1970. It tells the story of the Copelands, a sharecropper family living in provincial Georgia. While the abstract reputation of Walker continued, she published her first collection of short stories, *In Love and Trouble: Stories of Black Women* (1973), which depicts what was to become one of her important subjects, that of individuals of color endeavoring to transcend abuse (both biased persons and sexism). Later, she published *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down* (1981) and *The Way Forward is with a Broken Heart* (2000).

The novel of Alice Walker *Meridian* was distributed in 1976. It is one of her most clearly political books, and *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1992). *Meridian* is about the civil rights movement's activist workers in South America and it is nearly close to walker's experiences. It is about the story of a young black protagonist who is set against the social and political struggles of the 1960s and 1970s, particularly the Civil Rights Movement and the clashes of both the African American people and ladies to achieve certainty and legal and social value.

*The Color Purple* (1982), winner of the 1983 Pulitzer Prize, was adapted into a film coordinated and directed by Stephen Spielberg, it is Walker's most acclaimed and notable novel. Written in an epistolary form, and using casual language, it portrays Celie's miserable experiences in rural Georgia, and her sister Nettie, who is filling in as an evangelist in Africa. Celie's underlying life is dreadful, she is more than once attacked and assaulted by her stepfather. She gave birth to two children who are then taken away from her, and is constrained to marry a man who continues with this case of physical and mental abuse.

A lot of people felt that *The Color Purple* addressed the most important themes that Walker had ever considered. When the book was conveyed, the outcome was in fact impressive. Despite how individuals reacted to the novel, they read it and examined it. This thought showed up at its peak when Walker won the Pulitzer Prize in fiction on 18 Apr 1983. Walker was the first black author to win the prize. In the same year, she got the National Book Award. Once the novel was released and read, it obtained strong reactions among the African American populace, a couple of whom felt that Walker's genuine depiction of the sexism of the persons of color betrayed their fight for racial reasonableness and feeling of pride.

After *The Color's Purple* distribution, walker published another novel, *In Search of our Mother's Gardens* in 1983. In the noteworthy title composition, she conceived the term 'womanist', instead of 'feminist', to imply that white Western ladies' freedom has its limitations and routinely fails to fathom the viewpoint and experiences of ladies from different social orders and societies.

*The Color Purple* was an extreme book. It's not possible for anyone to peruse this novel without being moved. Alice Walker could communicate what is at the forefront of her thoughts. It can deciphered assorted ways, like the essentialness of women remaining together. Various lessons can be picked up from Celie's hard battle not simply from bias and prejudice when in doubt from supremacist whites yet also misogynist men in her own specific manner of life.

### **5- A Brief Insight *the Color Purple's* Major themes**

In the same way as other different books are committed to exposing the abuse of blacks and individuals of color particularly, *The Color Purple* is devoted to presenting the people of color's abuse, persecution and oppression , especially those of women.

A great part of the account in Walker's novel is inspired from her very own insight, experiencing childhood in the provincial South as a manhandled kid. So, the objective of this book and surely of all her writings is to persuade black women to defend their privileges. Celie, the principle character, goes through an inward change, from being mishandled and subjugated to a brazenly certain and free black woman and finance manager.

There are other more auxiliary subjects, for example, violence, oppression, racism and religion that we will present in the following section. These themes open a window for the readers to immerse themselves into a journey that depicts the lives of African Americans in the Southern United States, and show the devastation of African conventions in the African mainland.

### **5-1 Racism**

Racism is the conviction that individuals from one race are fundamentally prevalent than individuals from other races. In *The Color Purple*, bigotry is also a racist attitude that opposes a white opponent to a defenseless individual of color. It is important to understand that none of the adversaries in the novel are absolutely fiendish creatures. Mr. \_\_\_'s (Albert's) son Harpo beats his wife Sofia after Mr. \_\_\_ suggests that he is to a lesser extent a man because of Sofia's opposition, saying nothing can do that better than a decent solid beating. Mr. \_\_\_'s family and the individuals around him are treated by him much like his own domineering dad had treated him.

Sofia's detainment is a representation of the blacks detained by prejudice, limited to bondage inside their own homes. Because of this racism, there is the conviction all through the novel that bright and white skin is more beautiful. In her novel, walker explains the purpose for individuals' gratefulness to the bright skin which is viewed as better than the black complexion.

### **5-2 Religion**

In the beginning of the novel, Celie searches for God as she believes that he is a totally isolated figure from her reality, Celie doesn't have any idea of what God's

identity is. She just realizes that God is a “white patriarch.” Shug welcomes Celie to envision God as “something” entirely unexpected, who simply needs individuals to adore what “it” has made. She keeps in touch with God since she has no other method to communicate her sentiments. While her confidence is solid, it is subject to just what others have uncovered to her about God.

Later she reveals to Shug that she considers God to be a white man. She has this conviction since everybody she knows has said God is white and is a male, she says “it don't appear very right, however It's all she has” (Walker, 174). Afterward, Shug illuminates her that God isn't an old white man with whiskers by saying “Stop and think for a minute, state Shug. Here's the thing, say Shug. The thing I believe. “God is inside you and inside everybody else” (walker, 176). Likewise she says God has no race or sex. This empowers Celie to see God in an alternate manner. She understands that people can't credit human characteristics to God since God is part of the obscure.

In the novel, Celie informs God in her letters that he doesn't consider her sufferings. Be that as it may, she writes in her last letter: “Dear God, Dear stars, Dear trees, Dear sky, Dear peoples, Dear Everything. Dear God” (walker, 282). This reconsidering of God in her own terms represents Celie's change from an object of another person's consideration to an autonomous lady. It likewise demonstrates that her voice is adequately engaged to make her own account. .

### **5-3 Violence, abuse and viciousness**

The subject of violence and viciousness is commonly depicted in walker's book *The Color Purple*. The principal face of abuse is shown in the beginning of the book when Celie begins to portray her family. She alludes to her stepfather who beats her

mom and who continues to assault her so that she is impregnated by him, and when she brings forth her two kids, he takes them from Celie, making her believe that he killed them.

Also another example of violence and abuse in the novel is shown when The first wife of Mr. \_\_\_\_\_'s was violently killed by her lover in front of their kids. Murder is by all accounts simply one brutal and violent act in the town. Also, despite the fact that she was slaughtered immediately, the very demonstration of homicide is of great brutality. This later seeks after her child Harpo in his own quest for marriage. Another scene that demonstrates this theme is when Mr.\_\_\_\_\_ beats his new wife, Celie, on their big day. Additionally, his prejudicial behavior has been transmitted to his youngsters, moreover they also affront and beat her, as one of the children tosses a stone at her head, making her bleed. Furthermore, Mr.\_\_\_\_\_’s justification when Harpo asks him why he beats Celie is that beating a wife or woman is a masculine and husbandly obligation. So according to Mr.\_\_\_\_\_ He beats her because she is his wife.

#### **5-4 Self-Revelation and Self Improvement**

Eventually, this story is a story of self-revelation and discovery for Celie, and for different characters. Celie starts the novel as a uninvolved, calm little youngster, astounded by her own pregnancy, by the assault of her stepfather and the evil treatment by her husband. Gradually, in the wake of meeting Shug and seeing her sister flee, Celie creates useful aptitudes: she is a diligent employee in the fields, she figures out how to deal with a house and bring up youngsters, and she meets other motivating ladies, including Sofia, who has consistently needed to battle men in her day to day existence. Further, she discovers her own sexuality and ability to adore

through her sentiment toward Shug. The resulting awfulness is the impetus she needs to understand that she has within her all that she requires to carry on with a plentiful life.

Celie can at last cherish who she truly is and be thankful for that, to know that she is magnificent, and she is here. Nettie got a bigger number of long stretches of tutoring than Celie, and has seen the world, working as an evangelist in Africa. However, Nettie likewise understands that she can adjust her autonomy, and her longing to work, with a day to day existence that additionally involves Celie's kids, Olivia and Adam. Mister and Harpo make few acknowledgements about themselves and their treatment of ladies, and work to offer some kind of reparation for that. Shug discovers that however she isn't equipped for playing out a specific part in Celie's life; she can now work to communicate her affection.

## **6-Introduction to postmodern literature: postmodern theory**

Postmodernism can be defined as one among the literary theories of the present time and has offered to the world probably the best artistic and literary works of the 20th century. Postmodern writing is a sort of writing that changed the way writing is seen and perceived. Thusly, Contemporary or postmodern composing can be related to each composing formed after the second world war, it reflects and includes society's social and political viewpoints and perspectives, through sensible reasonable characters and recent improvements that help light up social characteristics and inadequacies, overall, it highlights the repulsiveness of war , extremism, bigotry and sex difference.

Postmodernism is an intelligent development of modernism with a distinct objective or point of view. Postmodern theory begins destroying a large portion of



our normal perspectives about how meaning is understood and how reality functions. The Postmodernist writings center on topics like identity, prejudice, racism and a quest for goodness in humankind. They are the primary subjects of this time-frame. Identity is a subject normally found in numerous African American writings. The topic of identity can likewise be found in the women' social equality development of the time when ladies battled for their place in the society.

Postmodern scholars and theorists proceed with such experimentation that we can likewise discover in modernist works, including the utilization of self-consciousness, parody, irony, fragmentation, equivocalness, synchronization. Postmodernism is not a way of thinking. It is anything but a bound together intelligent development with a distinct objective or point of view. Postmodernism can be the course of action of considerations which endeavor to portray or explain the circumstance in the public field or a word used in different settings to cover a wide scope of perspectives.

The social part of the black author stayed a significant issue during the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s, the scholarly and imaginative branch of the Black Power Movement. Some of the spokesmen for the movement, such as the poet Amiri Baraka, believed that black writers have an obligation to help the race through such literary aspects as portraying the wrongs of bigotry, giving positive pictures of African Americans, and offering potential answers for social issues going up against the African American population. Additionally, the Black Arts Movement influenced the part of African American literary critics by underlining their employment as social pundits.

Contemporary African American writers tackle subjects in different manner to communicate analysis and produce a discussion; their Poetry, oral and slave narratives, paved the way and was like a link to the improvement literature of the 20th century. The Harlem Renaissance, Civil Rights and Black Arts Movements assumed an incredible part in the improvement of African American writing. Many notable black journalists appeared and being known, including Du Bois, Langston Hughes, Cullen, Wright, Ellison, Baldwin, Amiri Baraka and Brooks. They expounded on their own encounters and the circumstance of the blacks in modern American culture. They utilized their fiction and verse to end isolation and secure social liberties.

Women and African Americans additionally started building up a particular identity in American culture. With individuals like Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, driving the Civil Rights Movement, the African American personality began getting perceived by society. Since not every person upheld this, bigotry likewise turned into another significant subject of the Contemporary time.

Through her content in *The Color Purple*, the well-known writer, Alice Walker, identifies and portrays the American Literary Movement of Postmodernism since she exactly addresses as far as possible the breaking boundaries subjects through the lives of African American women during segregation. Notwithstanding, the concepts and issues Walker asserts, that everybody should consider. Also Walker describes the development and the transformation both spiritual and physical through which the female characters and specifically the protagonist, Celie, come to understand that the presence of God is inside of the person, in his or her deep soul that "*The Color Purple*", the field wild of flowers, can also imply the presence of divine and God.

This worldwide novel is somewhere close to postmodernism and contemporary literary events and developments. At the point when Alice Walker wrote *The Color Purple*, slavery in America was very spread especially in the south among the African-Americans. *The Color Purple* is an epistolary fiction novel that includes number of themes and subjects including spirituality, religion, racism, gender roles, enduring, survival and self-healing and many others. The story of the book defied speculations, generalizations and spotlights on questionable subjects and shows the way of looking at life through the viewpoint of an African-American woman during the 20th Century. Moving to the style used in this epic by the talented Alice Walker which is altogether different than any average novel, as the novel is written in an epistolary way which mean in form of number of letters that reach out to the various viewpoints of different characters like Celie to God, Nettie to Celie, Celie to Nettie.

The novel can be considered as postmodern in its use of many genres like slave narrative, oral tradition, autobiography all of which are incorporated into the letter form. Hence, in the letters, a number of topics are communicated through the battles of the characters and the relation between them. This novel, by all accounts, delineates the significance for everybody, particularly Americans, to comprehend how African Americans were treated after the Civil War. This novel has an important place in literature since it has numerous topics that make it even more timeless. In addition to this fact, *The Color Purple* and has left a recognizable trace in the postmodern world, starting from the straightforward reflection on God by a “defective psyche”, to the depiction of God as a companion of the mistreated .

In her exemplary guide, Lois Tyson, the professor Emerita of English at Grand Valley State University, offers an exhaustive and available prologue to contemporary basic hypotheses, giving one of the most well-known ways to deal

with scholarly examination today, such as Feminism, Marxism, and Postmodernism in African American literature and many other theories.

Lois Tyson in her book entitled *Critical Theory Today: A Friendly Useful Guide*, the version concerning post-modern literature underscores that there was in the last part of the 1960s an extreme change in African American self-definition and self-recognition and perception, numerous African Americans experienced internalized racism and disguised bigotry. Disguised Internalized racism results from the mental programming by which a bigoted society influences ethnic minorities. Toni Morrison gives us one of the most chilling pictures of disguised bigotry in *The Bluest Eye* written in 1970, in which Pecola Breedlove, a youthful person of color who can not see her own magnificence, believes that she would be pretty, glad, and adored if just she had blue eyes. This theme is perceived in *The Color Purple* through Celie's vision of herself as an ugly, poor individual of color living in a male-dominated society. Additionally we discover the double consciousness which is the double vision that implies consciousness of having a place within more than one culture, the African and the American.

The reality of twofold cognizance included communicating in two dialects as the African American culture incorporates vernacular English that is spoken by the blacks. Essayists had a choice whether to compose for black or white readers and this choice includes the sort of language that the author utilizes, it is commonly related with the political perspectives of the author. Likewise there is in their subjects the battle for equity, the utilization of deconstruction that is to characterize “self” as a divided variety of “selves” (Tyson 365).

Through her book, Lois Tyson has provided a general perspective of postmodern African American literature that played a great role in the literary world since 1960.

## Conclusion

In 1982, Walker disseminated her most acclaimed novel *The Color Purple* which records the encounter of a few African-Americans in Georgia in the basic time of the 20th century. Upon its distribution, *The Color Purple* released a whirlwind of debates and disputes. It impacted warmed open considerations and thoughts about explicit social portrayals, as various African-American male intellectuals whimpered that the novel reaffirmed old extremist speculations about pathology of blacks explicitly.

As *The Color Purple* portrays a male centric society with a patriarchal Christianity in which black women lived and suffered. The book maintains many significant aspects that touch the colored women at that period such as racism, abuse, sexuality, oppression, slavery, religion and self-liberation and many other important themes that Alice Walker put emphasis on and showed through her story. Individuals of color were manhandled and have no privilege to express themselves, particularly women like Celie, Nettie, Sofia and Shug, they are expected to battle in various fronts, first because of being black in a white world and afterward being a lady in a male overpowered society.

Through *The Color Purple*, Walker presents her new visions and broke the limits that surrounded some subjects. She showed them by depicting the way black women survived during slavery and this is what marked her new path towards postmodernism which is the chosen approach to this research.

## **Chapter two**

# **A Journey towards Spiritual Survival and Self-Healing**

## Chapter 2: A Journey towards Spiritual Survival and Self-Healing

### Introduction

*The Color Purple* demonstrates the means by which African American women are treated and later on how they become proud of themselves, imposing their status on men and to society. In the novel, as readers, we notice that postmodernism is represented by stating some issues and topics such as religion, race, equality. So beginning with religion that is related to this improvement by being a need to go to chapel and a way to realize the meaning of love. Moreover, the notion of race in the story has a big significance among whites and blacks, since being a white man gives you more privileges and not the same as being a black, which means being a slave. Additionally, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution associate with the novel on consistency, uniformity, equality and battling for the Americans' own privileges to keep their pride. People in America will reliably believe in themselves and put forth a valiant effort and fearless exertion at all their acts.

Postmodernists trust fairness and equality for all, paying little mind to race, sexual direction, class or religion. Accordingly, there is not one right lifestyle choice. This development is still present in actual life and started around the 1980's when bigotry turned out to be to a greater extent a wrongdoing.

At the time Walker composed *The Color Purple*, America has been battling with the intolerance towards African-Americans, men-women segregation, sexual orientation and minority issues. *The Color Purple* is likewise the indication of the rise of African-American writings. Other than Alice Walker, Maya Angelou and Zora Neale Hurston were among the

female authors who raised similar issues as in *The Color Purple*. Their works show the difficulties of African-American women.

The narrative of the protagonist of this book, Celie, her difficult situations under the dominance of her stepfather and husband, and the accounts of African Americans subjugated to the white individuals' power really mirror the focal point of the post-modernist statements, particularly the ascending position of African-Americans.

Alice Walker brought newness to the literary world when she started publishing her books and turning out to be increasingly famous. She additionally started to present original thoughts in her novel that no other author had ever considered. This development is tied with seeing things in an unexpected way, as she presents to her readers the abstract development of Postmodernism by stating in her novel her African American experience.

### **1-The Concepts of God and Religion in *The Color Purple***

The next few pages are going to deal with exposing the notion of God, religion and how it is a first and important step towards achieving the spiritual survival of the colored female characters in *The Color Purple*, in addition to portraying the image of God in the novel's context.

Over time, religious issues have consistently been integral to literary works around the world. Essayists of all time of distinctive socio-cultural foundations and backgrounds have made religious issues a significant center in a large number of their works. Strictness and religiosity has become an indivisible part from the historical backdrop of black writings.

Alice Walker expresses that *The Color Purple* is a “theological work examining the journey from the religious back to the spiritual” (MacColl 8). In the introduction to the novel,



Walker shows that her religious improvement is the motivation for writing *The Color Purple* as she presents religion and spirituality as the primary subjects in the book.

Celie a very young feminist protagonist, who lives in South American society, yet her story is quite different from other recognizable feminist stories. Celie has come through very painful experiences as she was abused and assaulted by her stepfather many times, she had two children who were taken by her stepfather (who was the father of her babies) far from her, thinking that they were dead. As a consequence of this tragedy and injury, Celie finds it hard to connect with any man during her life even God (Celie sees God as a male).

Celie, in her connections and relationships is cheated, deceived and disowned from being a human being and a normal woman. Regardless, her relationship with God is the path into her salvation. She says that as long as she can spell the word G.O.D she has somebody close by (Andujo 64-65). Therefore, to Celie, God is all that she has in the oppressive and painful life that she lives, He is her companion and the only listener to her suffering. This fact is seen in the absolute starting point of the book as her stepfather cautions her to not inform any person of the abuse, mistreatment and oppression that she is living: "You better not tell nobody but God. It'd kill your mammy." (Walker 1)

Celie composes letters to God. She approaches Him for help and direction. In her first letter, she expresses, "Dear God... I have always been a good girl. Maybe you can give me a sign letting me know what is happening to me" (Walker 1). Notwithstanding, God never offers her a sign or any response to her supplications. The quietness of God here recommends that Celie is an uninvolved and powerless character in the start of the novel as she keeps in touch with God for his perfect assistance while she should comprehend the genuine image of God prior to beginning her self-development.

The church in the African American society, where the story happens is considered as a significant gathering place just as an association that impacts moral practices. As the following scenes in the story demonstrates and symbolizes the great role and major value the church has in the African American socio-cultural community as it limits their lives, hence, for instance, Shug is denounced by a priest in the church, and , Harpo meets Sofia at a community gathering, so that these models and examples present the church goes as critical and judgmental.that's why throughout the story's events Walker refuses this African-American kind of Christianity, since it is based on intolerance and judgments.

Celie, the protagonist who faced oppression, violence, and mistreatment since her mother's death till her marriage with Mr Albert was silent face this misery. Celie takes writing letters to God as the only way to escape and express her suffering, as we come to know her story through her letters. The first words of the novel was "Dear God" (Walker 1) that represent a key sentence that highlights the significant notion of religion and God in the book.

Nettie, celie's sister, was her only companion, but she tries to avoid and escape being victimized and oppressed like her sister Celie. Celie loses contact with her sister Nettie and stays in an existence of aggressive behavior at home with her husband and her children. She never battles or requests her privileges. Celie's capacity to redefine and to reclassify God happens when she feels awful and can't rest after she accomplishes something incorrectly. She prompts her step child Harpo to beat his wife, Sofia, so as to be compliant and submissive as she is, "I sin against Sofia spirit" (Walker 39). Sofia goes up against her. Sofia is a strong woman, a contender who doesn't acknowledge to be beaten by a man.

The female characters in the novel have different perceptions of religion and God. According to sofia, religion is acceptable when it is helpful and useful, yet if it stands in the way one's empowerment, it must be rejected. This is the key fact that Celie should consider in

order to perceive the true image of God. However, Shug has a different view, as she sees religion in more a spiritual way that devine, God and religion are within every person, to her, religion gives soul liberty, atonomy and independence, therefore this perception had made shug face many hard things once she arrives to the town. These things that were narrated by Celie depicts the hypocrisy of the church to not accept any other religion's view except the patriarchal one which exists in their church.

The writer's perception, notion and appreciation of the significance of God are a dominant theme in the novel which is fundamental for Celie's survival. Kimberly R. Chambers quotes Walker in her essay "Right on Time: History and Religion in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*":

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. And sometimes it just manifest itself even if you not looking, or don't know what you looking for...I believe God is everything...Everything that is or ever was or ever will be (195)

The notion and image of God portrayed by Alice Walker in this novel is not personified. Being neither male nor female, God is not black or white and surely not a white male dominator. The novel concludes that God is within everything and everywhere and within every time. God does not need a religious system.

## **2-The Evolution of the Female Characters: Spiritual and Religious Development and Growth.**

The following part is explicitly concerned with the topic of Spirituality and religious change in the novel. It centers around the impact of spiritual evolvment on the three fundamental female characters of the novel and addresses the writer's very own understanding

and interpretation of the divine and faith. I intend to show that profound and spiritual change is associated with self-awareness and personal growth and development.

Alice Walker had made a momentous and distinctive story that is sensational, inspiring and elevating. The change of the characters affects profoundly the reader as a result of its immortal timeless and culturally diverse characteristics. The subject of God and spirituality is one of the most basic themes that inconvenience mankind. In her novel, Walker depicts the possibilities and opportunities for change and trust in a superior and better life. The personality of Celie, a deceived woman who through a caring relationship with Shug rethinks her spiritual belief process and in the long run and recovers her soul, capacity and confidence, is a character that typifies struggles of numerous women and men around the globe. The personality of Shug is an operator who rouses and inspires change in other characters.

Walker clarifies in the preface to the Tenth Anniversary Edition of her novel *The ColorPurple* that:

This book is the book in which I was able to express a new spiritual awareness, a rebirth into strong feelings of Oneness I realized I had experienced and taken for granted as a child; a chance for me as well as the main character, Celie, to encounter That Which Is Beyond Understanding But Not Beyond Loving and to say: I see and hear you clearly, Great Mystery, now that I expect to see and hear you everywhere I am, which is the right place.

Indeed, *The Color Purple* is Walker's profound journey that reflects that of the protagonist Celie; both of them share a common and typical way.

## 2-1 Celie's Spiritual Growth

The personality of Celie is presented when she is scarcely fourteen years old. The young woman is consistently assaulted and beaten by her stepfather and is genuinely disregarded by her mother. She resorts to writing letters to God, which functions as a type of treatment. Celie reveals to her sister that her life caused her to feel so ashamed that she couldn't tell it to God; she needed to write it (Walker 117). At a similar time, she shows a solid and strong soul when she thinks about God and as long as she can write and spell God with G.O.D in every sense of the word, so that she feels herself not alone and has someone along and beside her and this gives her strength and hope (Walker 19).

Celie's life in the start of the story was touring around being victimized by her stepfather, she always felt ashamed about herself and about what had befallen and happened to her. She sees herself as an awful, disgraceful and unvalued person, expecting punishment for any act she did, she simply recounts and tells God about what she is confronting, she neither pray him for heaven, neither for anything else, just admitting her painful life. Being illiterate, Celie's image of God is limited to that of the hypocritical church and depends on the Bible's views, accordingly while envisioning Heaven, just like imagining God as a white man, Celie imagines blessed messengers wearing white with white hair going with a white God resembling a bank official (Walker 11).

Despite the fact that Celie's perception of God is questionable, she is sufficiently desperate to put her trust into this God. She embodied God as a white male, and despite the fact that she fears men she continues trusting 'Him'. Celie attends services in church but she notices the injustice and lack of spirituality there, women in the church are sometimes nice to her and sometimes not (Walker 42). The evangelist does not offer help or profound and spiritual tutoring to the young woman; he just recognizes her difficult work cleaning the congregation by saying: "you faithful as the day is long" (Walker 42). She gets mindful of

how critical and judgmental the churchgoers are towards Shug Avery, gossiping about the vocalist and alluding to her as a “slut, hussy, heifer and a street cleane” (Walker, 42). Despite the fact that Celie understands the useless condition of the religion she acquired, she doesn't wonder about her own comprehension of God.

After she weds Mr Albert, a horrendous land-proprietor and single man with four kids, her life doesn't change a lot. She turns into a casualty to her husband and stepchildren and will not struggle for her privileges: “But I don't know how to fight. All I know how to do is stay alive” (Walker 18). As a result of this demeanor, Celie bears the physical maltreatment without any protests. Smothering and disregarding her emotions is the main way she can endure ; she in a real sense envisions herself being a tree while her husband bears her (Walker 23). In spite of the troublesome life she has to suffer and live, Celie is a caring woman. She has the ability to love though she does not understand it. Despite the fact that she dislikes Mr. Albert's youngsters, she keeps an eye on them in a mindful and circumspect manner. Being benevolent and adoring, she doesn't encounter love back. She has nobody to have a supporting and companion relationship with. Having lost her mother from her early childhood, and afterward her dearest sister, the main two individuals she could identify with and relate to, Celie carries on with her life as a very isolated person.

The absence of self-esteem and confidence is an essential aspect of Celie's character. As a sufferer of extreme maltreatment and deprived of any personal satisfaction, she experiences lost glory and personal value, which are the best impediments in picking up autonomy and independence, as Claudia Tate, scholar and researcher, highlights in 1985: “to base one's self-esteem on self sacrifice by caring exclusively for others, whether it be one's mate, children or one's extended family, and not to care for one's spiritual well-being is a self-destructive proposition” (XXIII). Feeling useless, disliked and lonely, Celie can't develop and change.

Celie's sensational spiritual change starts after the acknowledgment that all she accepted about her family isn't correct: "my daddy lynch. My mama crazy. All my little half-brothers and sisters no kin to me. My children not my sister and brother. Pa not pa. you [God] must be sleep" (Walker 160). Celie feels betrayed and abandoned by God and from that moment she begins to question the divinity that she "inherited" (Walker, Interview). It is Shug who helps Celie to "find her own reality of goodness" (Walker, Interview). Shug shares her own whimsical definition of God as "nature" (Walker 117), "God ain't a He or a She but a 'It'....God is everything .... Everything that is or ever was, or ever will be"(176).

Celie acknowledges this new form of God and from that second her life changes significantly. Her trust in the celestial is reestablished and she feels more grounded associated with the divine all around her. She liberates herself from the harsh hand of her husband and afterward gladly recovers the appropriate for her reality that she is poor and black but she exists and she is here. With valiance Celie leaves her husband and takes the risk of a new life. Resolved to recapture self-esteem and liberty she moves to the city where she begins a totally unique life.

Over a large part of the story, Celie's faith in God is related to the image of a man who is "big and old and tall and gray bearded and white" (walker 194), this extremely belief in a type of white, male strength that secures Celie in her feeble personality, since she does not consider the real image of God, she just coordinate everything to being related to man. If only she recognized the power and value that a woman can have.

In the start of the novel, Celie speaks with God through a speech (monologue) in form of letters. There is no open door for talk with a divine and a God that she couldn't really perceive herself with. Which mean that actually in order to have a discourse and communicate with him, she needs first recognize and separate herself as "other", as a woman , a black woman, and hence surely inferior to him. Moreover, Celie redefines and reclassifies her profound

spiritual beliefs, so that she is not able to worship that traditional conventional God that gives a view of a Christian male-like-icon: “by attacking ‘him’ [but] by leaving ‘him’ behind” (Daly 18). Shug's animistic way of thinking had an incredible influence upon Celie and paved the way to discover her own identification of spirituality, therefore, Celie moved from the fact of the lopsided act of believing and trusting God to a more deeply felt relationship and connection with the spirit, so that she sees everything around her from the eye of her soul. This profound spiritual communication permits Celie to heal the past pains and accomplish an internal harmony and peace in the present.

## **2-2 Nettie's Spiritual Growth**

Nettie's spiritual journey is somehow distinct and unique in relation to that of Celie. Nettie is considered the beautiful young woman and consequently creates solid confidence; moreover, she is capable to complete her education. Nettie considers education to be a way to escape destitution and dependence, she is a decided person. Incapable to bear oppression, she flees from home and is driven away from her sister. Dissimilar to Celie, Nettie battles against Mr. Albert: “I started to fight him. And with God's help, I hurt him bad enough to make him let me alone” (Walker 114).

Coordinated by Celie, Nettie discovers heaven in the home of Reverend Samuel and his wife Corrine. Under the devout oversight of her new bread-providers, Nettie carries on her education. Nettie's new family is evangelists belonging to the American and African Evangelist Society. They are caring and high minded persons. The couple regards the young lady as if she were their girl. Of course, Nettie prospers in her new home.

Nettie's interest, her capacity to keep an open mind and her ingenuity in learning, leads her to a more profound comprehension of the world. Notwithstanding, even in spite of the fact that she studies strict religious lessons, she succeeded to have her own vision of God. All



through her examinations and perusing, Nettie learns with shock that her own view of God has been contorted through the church education she had gained up until this point: “all the Ethiopians in the bible were colored. It had never occurred to me, though when you read the bible it is perfectly plain if you pay attention only to the words. It is the pictures in the bible that fool you....All of the people are white and so you just think all the people from the bible were white too” (Walker 120).

The journey to Africa is a fundamental way for Nettie in her comprehension of a feeling of adoration. The first look at the African coast leaves her ecstatic (Walker 128). It is the first occasion when Nettie encounters something beyond the objective comprehension of God. In Africa Nettie is entranced by the diverse culture: the garments, the individuals, the language, yet she is continually helped to remember every last bit of her own bias. Individuals in Africa were not “downtrodden people from whom they (Afro-Americans) sprang. People who need Christ and good medical advice” (Walker 118).

It was during the time that she was living among Olinka individuals that Nettie encountered the most significant and profound spiritual transformation. At the inviting ceremony, the Olinka people served food and wine to the missionaries and through their dance and songs they told the story of their God, the roof leaf. Their belief in a leaf, however, was not a simple-minded worshiping of a false God. The Natives exhibited a nature-based conception of the divine, acknowledging a balance and harmony in nature (Walker 138-9). Nettie regards and respects the local individuals' insight and mindfulness.

In Africa, Nettie understands that not every person has faith in Christianity but then, like the Olinka individuals, they are profoundly spiritual in their own specific manner: “the women spend all their time in the fields, tending their crops and praying. They sing to the earth and to the sky and to their cassava and groundnuts. Songs of love and farewell” (Walker 156). In the wilderness, Nettie gets aware of the way that the pictures of heavenly individuals

of the Christian religion that she brought from England don't fit in her little cabin (Walker 147).

At long last, Nettie learns and adopts that everything in life should be seen in a spiritual way and based on soul and spirit. She depicts her last perception and interpretation of God in one of her letters to Celie, where she clarifies that having spent numerous years in Africa and along these lines being impacted by natives, she sees God more as a sentiment of love inside, more a soul than a person, a source without gender. Having no picture related to God is for her a freedom. She closes with a thought of building up another religious development which would base its central goal on looking for God inside, totally separated from emblematic and icon worshipping practices (Walker 233). In spite of the fact that Nettie was not intentionally looking for the association and connection with God, education and her journey lead her to it.

### **2-3 Shug's Spiritual Growth**

Shug Avery is by all accounts the most dubious character as the mistress of Mr. Albert, husband of Celie. She is a solid and free individual, not caught by society's perspective on women and thus carries on with her life in her own particular manner. As the story evolves, Shug starts living in Albert's house, being cared by Celie as she was ill at her arrival. Through time, the two women become companions and afterward lovers. The unmistakable attribute about Shug Avery in the story is the way that she appears to have a prepared thought of God in her life. She is spiritually evolved in that sense: "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. And sometimes it just manifest itself even if you not looking, or don't know what you looking for" (Walker 176).

The personality of Shug is acquainted with the story not as a genuine individual, but as an object of tattle (Walker 21). The reality that Shug is presented as an object and not as an

individual, gives a sentiment of mystery to her. Celie is interested by the tales about Shug and she admires the vocalist, considering her to be a super person, envisioning her as a sovereign who is wearing lovely red and purple outfits.

Individuals around who are not her fans have a ton of assumptions about Shug. Being an object of want and along these lines apparent as a danger, she is disparaged by the religious institution (Walker 42). Baffled by the absence of spirituality in church, Shug does not go to administrations (Walker 174). Despite the fact that Shug deserted the church that she was naturally introduced to, she found an alternate way towards spirituality. Having had a profound experience when little, Shug grasps a conviction that everything is interconnected, coming from and embraced by divine power (Walker 176-7).

Through the story's development of events, Shug turns into a visitor in Mr Albert home, her picture gradually transforms: she is not, at this point simply an icon to revere nor an individual to censure. A weak side of Shug surfaces as she carries on practically like an injured creature: "she weak as a kitten. But her mouth just pack with claws" (Walker 47). As the two women become close and offer their privileged insights, we find out about Shug's past. As a young girl, Shug felt disliked by her mom, so as anyone might expect, in the wake of meeting Albert she falls enthusiastically infatuated with him. After some time and with the tolerating, adoring and sustaining care of Celie, the valid and pure nature of Shug grows and develops. She is a sympathetic companion, and becomes a spiritual partner and friend.

Shug is sufficiently developed to perceive and recognize her own narrow minded conduct and attitudes from an earlier time, which had injured others. She laments the manner in which she treated Celie when they met, yet additionally is embarrassed by the way she treated Albert's first wife several years back. Shug is by all accounts indifferent and unconcerned about material things. Despite the fact that she is rich and much known, she is neither

pompous nor egoist. She is in reality a liberal companion: “She buy Grady anything he think he want” (Walker 101).

Shug is a fascinating individual, a unique thinker and having an important understanding of life. Free, independent and able to support herself, Shug moreover encourages different characters to build up self-confidence. It is Shug who encourages Celie to begin a free life and to locate another measurement in her spiritual improvement. Throughout the story, the view of Shug changes step by step as from concealed and unheard, she is later seen as adorable, insightful and deserving care. In the end, Shug isn't simply observed as an object of pleasure but is perceived as a person with singular qualities and feebleness: “hug acts more manly than most men. I mean she upright, honest. Speak her mind and the devil take the hindmost [...] Shug will fight [...] she bound to live her life and be herself no matter what” (Walker 244).

Spiritual journey and change is a point of convergence in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*. The spiritual journey of the characters takes into account self-knowledge and self-acknowledgment, and at last brings about development and growth. Alice Walker's spiritual journey was shown in Celie's early image of God who is manlike. And Shug Avery's conception of God is a depiction of Walker's later notion of God that God does not take human aspects. Walker's anecdotal characters struggle to reach spirituality in their existence.

### **3- Celie's Journey to Self-Healing and Reconstruction: Establishing a Unique Identity**

This last part of the chapter is devoted to the journey of Celie towards independence, self-healing and esteem, with highlighting the great impact of women's bonds and sisterhood in achieving spiritual and self-healing. Some of the characters searched for self-knowledge,

liberated themselves from the patriarchal male, and discovered their inner identity like Celie did.

### **3-1 Women solidarity and sisterhood**

Contemporary African-American writers present in their literary works their own manifestations that propose black females' solidarity as a centric topic. The connection among women is interesting and explicit since they share the similar misery, enslavement and mistreatment in the American South (men centric) society. Once women bond together and comfort one another, they find release. Female solidarity represents a focal power and force that assumes a major role in Celie's liberation process. Basically, it motivates Celie to set herself free both physically and profoundly and to change her life totally, all this with the assistance of these women going from her sister, Nettie, to her daughter in law, Sofia, and her significant husband's mistress, Shug.

women's activists use the term sisterhood to express the bond of women who are not naturally related yet are reinforced in solidarity. Throughout the novel, Walker portrays female connections as a way and first path of her female characters towards obtaining freedom and liberating themselves from oppression and abuse they faced. In fact, living in a society full of men savagery and dominance, solidarity and sisterhood were the only thing that give them security, hope and shared love. Moreover, these female relationships have many shapes, as some of them are among moms and daughters (Motherhood), among sisters (Sisterhood), some are sexual relationships and some are just friendships. Therefore, Singh and Gupta guarantee that sisterhood assumes a huge role in *The Color Purple*, since they claim that it guarantees Celie's enlivening as she increases profound help and spiritual support

from her sister Nettie, her significant other darling Shug Avery and her stepson's wife Sofia (218).

Females' companionship are presented as a sanctified relationship by Alice Walker in *The Color Purple* that take women throughout her intense way towards security, independence, liberation and confidence. The famous writer Walker exposes and embodies her vision and thoughts about the major impact solidarity can have on a person in her story's female hero Celie. As *The Color Purple's* female characters Celie to own a voice of power. As well as, Clenora Hudson Weems claims in her Book *African Womanist Literary Theory* in 2004:

Given that we know all too well how comforting sisterhood is, we must welcome it and its rewards for others as well as for ourselves. Thus, for the moment, let us reflect on how much more beautiful our world would be if all sisters simply loved each other. Our children would be more secure, therefore, they would have not just one female guardian, but many to attend to their needs(73).

Indeed, solidarity needs to accomplish more with the spiritual, physical and material assistance that women use to help one another. This bond aids to dispose of obvious huge number of challenges and difficulties for gaining freedom, and having a voice to express one's thoughts and personality.

Delving in this subject, the reader sees three fundamental females who have a great impact on Celie's character creation. Alice Walker presents the three characters, Nettie, Sofia and Shug as central focuses in Celie's life without whom she could never break the silence and enlarge her points of view. In a succession of episodes, organized appropriately by the

novelist, the reader sees the improvement of the uninvolved quiet Celie to a smart mature woman because of her embracing females.

### **3.2 Shug Avery and Celie: A Means to Celie's Religious, Spiritual and Self- Liberation**

*The Color Purple* is, possibly, one of the most celebrated epistolary novel written by an African American female author whose subject of Religion and the divine's image is fundamental to the advancement of the plot and the protagonist's way to self-healing and freedom.

The role of Shug Avery in Walker's epic is obvious and unquestionable. The author conveys through her character subjects that, perhaps, are more personal than some other that are accessible in her-story. In this manner, Walker is giving some detectable quality as well as resonance to explicit pieces in the lives of females that remain concealed both in insightful and social speeches. These parts are concerned with the profound faith and religion, breaking down the patriarchal Christian beliefs, and this has been one of the most basic issues in the lives of African-Americans since subjection. Therefore, Shug shows up in the novel as a liberal woman who works as a blues artist, she has formed her character from her numerous encounters, rather than exposing her will to other people and permitting them to impose their personality upon her.

When Shug becomes sick, she acknowledges and responds to the consideration and care Celie shows her. As Shug's relationship with Celie begins and develops through the novel's events, Shug fills the functions of mother, partner, sister, educator, lover and companion. Shug's numerous roles make her a dynamic character that travels through a hurricane of various urban areas. In spite of her eccentric nature and changing jobs, Shug remains Celie's most faithful companion constantly all through the novel.

The concept of God that was portrayed by Shug Avery as something loving and helping everyone gives a profound and real meaning of religion, and therefore, it causes Celie to understand that the main concern in life is love, esteem and satisfaction throughout everyday life. Moreover, a defining point occurs when Shug began to engage in Celie's intrinsic idea of God. Depicted as a unique, an original, a freed colored woman in the book, Shug is occupied with a progression of insightful discussions with Celie.

Differentiating her idea of God from Celie's, Shug accepts that despite the fact that Christianity may denounce her way of life and liberal perspective, God himself will not, on the grounds that He is benevolent and He is everything. Besides, she rejects Celie's male centric God as she presents her spirituality in seeing God. Clearly, Shug Avery's way of life and liberal perspective built up her unconventional mentality of resistance towards male centric system. Henceforth comes her resistance to Celie's origination of God as a total patriarch. Seeing God as a male figures not just the separation Shug with God, it quickens male dominancy to a more significant level. Shug's God is thus similar to the nature that anybody can feel since 'It' is similar to the air, wind, and trees.

Shug's conception of God comes to be an essential point in Celie's life. Her entire hearted implication to Shug's vision of the world and God influences enormously self-affirmation in her. At last, Celie addresses her letter to God, stars, trees, and everything. This means that she notes her recently conceived reconstruction of concept of God. Her acknowledgment of a more spiritual faith is basic in Celie's life as it changes her comprehension of Black religious philosophy and society by and large. Other than the religious beliefs and encouragement to have another impression of spirituality, Shug shows Celie sexuality and many other things that would help her discover and shape her identity.



### **3-3 Nettie and Celie: A Means to Celie's Intellectual Growth**

In the following part, I will present the female character from Walker's novel that additionally adds to Celie's intellectual development. She is Nettie, Celie's sister. Likewise, I will talk about the ways Nettie causes her sister develops intellectually and, for this situation, I will generally highlight the issues identified with education as a key term.

To Celie, Nettie is the representation of education and hope. The two characters live in a family where love is totally missing. The step father treats Celie cruelly. In contrast with Celie, Nettie endeavors to diminish her sister after she sees that her sister is beaten and mortified by her egotistical spouse, Mr. Albert, and she rouses her to battle him to stop his mistreatment toward her. This attitude mirrors the force and the solid character that she has and her capacity to make changes. Moreover, Nettie urges her sister to react against any maltreatment that she gets from Albert's youngsters by causing them to comprehend that she has her own character and she can impose her presence.

Nettie is an educated young woman and she is very dazzled by Miss Beasley, her teacher, who is a rebellious individual with her own convictions and disturbed perspective. Miss Beasley encourages Nettie to frame her very own identity, reasonableness and capacity to face troubles. Similarly, Celie manages Nettie as her own educator who aids and gives her the guidelines to confront her inconveniences. Nettie encourages her sister to endure the disastrous conditions through showing her anything that she actually needs, such as writing and reading. This mirrors Nettie's solid assurance and will to spare and save her sister.

Actually, at first Celie comes across herself by composing letters to remain against herstep-father. The protagonist Celie is a character without power who doesn't have the position to state her character, yet incredibly, Celie doesn't show a feeling of hopelessness and chooses to archive her challenges and enduring recorded as a hard copy letters to her sister which is considered as a sort of insubordination to the current circumstance. This sort of

writing is considered as a rebel against the individuals who abused her much of the time and attempted to underestimate her and quietness her. Thus, these letters are considered as the sign that ends her silence and leads her to the universe of freedom. The female hero, Celie, considers writing letters as a mean to heal her psychology and feelings from the injury of those around her. Despite of the fact that composing have not made an end to her troubles, it reinforces and gave her strength to live in that situation. Therefore, writing gives Celie the chance to express and be aware of what she is dealing with. Through writing she succeeded to create her own world where she feels herself liberated, and this leads her to wonder about freedom and reject and rebel against oppression. Hence, writing remains a way to rebuild herself and search for her spiritual life and beliefs and none can deny the impact of Nettie in this.

While the learning cycle is in progress, Celie's first pregnancy intrudes on her advancement, which frustrates her learning and somewhat moves her to the fringe of her home once more. The stepfather takes her out of school and, along these lines, she is precluded to education. As opposed to Nettie's intellectual advancement, Celie endures the most grounded mistreatments.

Notwithstanding, Nettie protects her sister by reaffirming the presence of her insight and intelligence, as she enthusiastically brings the fundamental things for her to increase some essential school material since Celie needs to begin from the basic level. Nettie's motivation is to pass information onto Celie. For instance, Nettie's tutoring is clear when she attempts to clarify to Celie that the Earth is round, so that these are Celie's gullible words: "She [Nettie] try to tell me something about the ground not being flat. I just say, Yeah, like I know it. I never tell her how flat it look to me" (Walker 12).

Nettie watches intently the fierceness and oppression that her sister experiences while remaining with Celie at Albert's home after fleeing from her father. Therefore, she applies

incredible efforts so as to free her sister by showing her various things like little cards that she puts on the items whose names are composed on the card. This educational objective is set by Nettie to free Celie of her subjection. Having this sort of expertise begins to influence Celie's faith in God by reprimanding Him for all the miserable parts of her life which she has experienced. Additionally, she gets ready to examine her sister's letters that she sends from Africa.

Celie discovers in writing letters an encouraging method to compensate her sister's non attendance and absence. This expertise illuminates Celie and she turns into a proficient individual. In her letters, Nettie tries to comfort her sister and change her views towards the whites through clarifying some Scriptural stories, such as saying that all the strict figures referenced in the Holy book are dark. This kind of information adjusts Celie's perspective and standards of what she had procured about whites. Subsequently, she gets pleased with her country.

Actually, through her letters, Nettie has just figured out how to tell Celie all that she encounters. Subsequently, Nettie can carry Africa closer to Celie; she opens her mind through reading, and shows her another world, an entirely unexpected one. She depicts in the wilderness the traditions of the Olinka people. It is then when we watch again that Nettie considers education as something very important for anyone, as this is additionally one reason why she is an evangelist. With this, with the accentuation on education and having knowledge, Nettie appears to standardize the possibility that women ought to have similar chances and equivalent rights to be taught as men seem to have. She censures, somewhat, the way that Olinkas do not permit females to get to education since they are not permitted to go to class:

They are all boys. Olivia, [who is Celie's daughter], the only girl. The Olinka do not believe girls should be educated. When I asked a mother

why she thought this, she said: A girl is nothing to herself; only to her husband can she become something. What can she become? I asked. Why, she said, the mother of his children. (Walker 123)

Accordingly, knowledge and education are the way through which women can cause their voices to be heard, give themselves esteem and fight. These are some of the manners in which women can find a respectable place in their community and show to the world their very own position. As indicated by Nettie's teaching, constancy is the way to progress in the conviction that women everywhere in the world must reserve the right to education. In addition, it is because of the determination of the African American individuals and their significant responsibility that a deep struggle for blacks has had an effect in history. It could be expressed that Nettie is instrumental in causing a similar development in Celie, by urging her to participate in the fight, furthermore, by sending her certain instructive qualities.

Along these lines, Nettie causes Celie to know of the qualities that she has and to deal with the capacity to withstand difficulties. Hence, at the end of the novel, two sisters are finally reunited together, it reveals the end of Celie's transformation from a poor, oppressed and miserable to a fulfilled, successful, independent and self-sufficient woman.

### **3-4 Sofia and Celie: A Means to Celie's Recognition of Woman's Values and Rights**

As it has been investigated and talked about in the previous parts, Celie gets educated and literate and finds out about her own spirituality and intellectuality because of Nettie. This part examines another character who also helped Celie: Sofia Butler. All through the accompanying pages, I will examine the role of this character and her impact on Celie so as to exhibit that she is likewise exceptionally significant, hence the following section reveals the

making of another picture that shows an emphatic black woman who both knows and wildly requests her privileges.

The characters in *The Color Purple* are joined by “a shared experience of suffering and a common struggle to survive in the face of oppression, violence and abuse” (Fiske 151). Such a union is a union that structures among Celie and Sofia Butler. Although she also had experienced racism and slavery in a very hard and painful way, Sofia is portrayed as the fighter woman who sets her own standards and principles throughout everyday life and sticks to them firmly. As an example, she emphatically accepts that fighting and struggling is the best way to endure and the main strategy that can be followed to guard her character. She engages in numerous issues and problems with various individuals from her family to save her character and to show her fixed convictions. The citation without a doubt mirrors Sofia's life and the sort of family that she grew up with.

Sofia is a solid woman, she rejects the persecuted social conditions and won't be mishandled by any person. She attempts to be free and become an independent character to build up and develop her own life. In such way, she fights the whites and blacks in order to pick up her privileges and gain her rights. She does not acknowledge being subordinate while Mr. Albert was humiliating her. This gives men the message that she is set up to shield her character whatever it costs. For instance, she reacts against the abuse and embarrassment she got from the civic chairman by hitting him back. This response is staggering to Celie on the grounds that this is the first occasion she sees a female with a full insubordinate and rebellious soul. In this way, Sofia is a good example and genuine model for Celie in light of the fact that she urges her to search for her personality and to fight back against brutality and make her own free life and identity. Celie is in reality stunned by the decided and strong character of Sofia. Celie sees Sofia unexpectedly when Sofia comes asking Mr. Albert to wed his child, Harpo.

Man's predominance is encapsulated in the character of Mr. Albert. Prior to leaving Mr. Albert's home, she informs Harpo that she can't keep on her relation with him except if he lives uninhibitedly and can make choices alone. This circumstance dazzles Celie extraordinarily since she sees the valiance and strength of Sofia. Likewise, this response influences the ordinary image of women in the public eye that Celie knows about. Sofia wedded Harpo regardless of his dad's refusal. At the beginning, they live happily and securely. Besides, Harpo doesn't give the portrait of the black male, whose fundamental element is predominance, he rather helps his significant other in the entirety of the house tasks, for example, dealing with the chimney and washing clothes.

They live cheerfully together, yet this sort of connection is restricted in a society that has faith in subjection and differentiation between the two sexes. Despite the fact of being irritated, Sofia “shares wisdom with Celie that is so fresh and innovative to Celie that she cannot immediately comprehend the implications” (Martin 31). And as I quote Sofia from *The color purple*, she says:

“All my life I had to fight. I had to fight my daddy. I had to fight my brothers. I had to fight my cousins and my uncles. A girl child ain't safe in a family of men. But I never thought I'd have to fight in my own house. She let out her breath. I loves Harpo, she say. God knows I do. But I'll kill him dead before I let him beat me”. (Walker 40)

By estimating “Sophia's audacity against her own submissiveness... Celie begins to question her own passivity and recognizes the irrepressible force of her emotions hidden behind her letters to God” (Fiske 152). At that point, Celie started to wonder about being passive and about her situation , it was like Sophia began to make Celie question about many

things almost woman power and values: “I say it cause I’m a fool, I say. I say it cause I’m jealous of you. I say it cause you do what I can’t” (Walker 40). Fathoming Celie's feeble mindedness and absence of bravery to struggle for herself, Sofia looks for a way to impart capacity and share power and strength: “I say, You feels sorry for me, don’t you? She think a minute. Yes ma’am, she say slow, I do” (Walker 41).

Celie and Sofia become companions and friends and through their sisterhood Celie “begins to understand Sofia’s strength and to adopt parts of Sofia’s ideology as her own”(Martin 32). At times Sofia doesn’t behave like a woman, yet like a man, which was a peculiar thing to Celie. That is noticeable on a couple of events. The first happens when she referenced Celie the conveyance of housework among her and Harpo: "I rather be out in the fields or fooling with the animals. Even chopping wood. But he love cooking and cleaning and doing little things round the house” (Walker 59).

So in other words, Sofia comprehends that Celie is brutally manhandled in this environment by Mr. Albert, thus, she encouraged Celie to confront Mr. Albert to stop his brutality against her. From that point forward, the two of them start to see one another and they talk honestly about their hopeless encounters which shape the defining moment of their discourse. Sofia revealed to Celie that she was abused by her family, however she didn't give up to their wills and she continued safeguarding herself to have her own right. She informed Celie that the social framework forces women to be subordinate to men and they should oppose this system which impedes them from having their fundamental rights, as education.

No one can deny the major role and the massive impact of female solidarity and sisterhood on the novel’s protagonist Celie and her journey to achieve self- healing in all sorts, following a spiritual path. Thanks to Shug, Nettie and Sofia, Celie is able finally to possess a mind of her own and speak the unspeakable out loud whether in or out of home. The three female characters give a full example of bond and sisterhood and help each other to maintain the

process of self-healing, mainly celie's one as this section focused on her spiritual and mental liberation through women solidarity. Walker affirms that female unity is built on faith, trust and sharing which are essential requirements to achieve an independent individual (294).

Therefore,

This "female bonding," which occurs over an extended period of time, enables Celie -a depressed survivor- victim of parent loss, emotional and physical neglect, rape, incest, trauma, and spousal abuse- to resume her arrested development and continue development of processes that were thwarted in infancy and early adolescence (Proudfit 13).

### **3-5 The Role of Quilting and Quilt-making in the Process of Healing**

The art of quilting includes sewing together pieces of fabric and cloths to join parts into both a show-stopper and a practical family need. In African American society, women have been engaged with quilting since they were brought to America as slaves. In fact, homegrown material plan has to a great extent been the space of ladies in the United States across racial limits. Moreover, the masterfulness of quilt for the ones who partake in it is a method for inventive self-articulation through spontaneous creation and the anomaly of the African American blanket and quilt plans that are exceptional to that network. Therefore, the self-articulation engaged with quilting makes a trinity of solidarity for ladies and among this strengthening and sisterhood. Once the ladies partake in that convention of quilting, that female bond paved the way to achieve power to fix together their broken hope and lives, so, here solidarity leads them to face difficulties like oppression, mistreatment, destitution and sexism. Hence, quilting and sewing are considered as a means to accomplish power from the joining of the multitude of parts that make them special.



Alice Walker utilizes quilt and quilt-making as a symbol to picture the impact and strong meaning of solidarity and self-construction and the source of women spiritual power. Similarly as a quilt can generally be changed and modified through time, so can the individual be adjusted a lot through new encounters. And here in *The Color Purple* the quest of sewing and quilting is investigated for some black women as they explore the priority of solidarity and sisterhood which can quilting accommodate.

Celie is one of the most divided and persecuted ladies in African American literature who works quilts with Sofia called “Sister's Choice”. So ,the two ladies quilt together after Sofia discloses to Celie why she won't agree to be beaten by Harpo. Moreover, when Celie and Shug quilt together, they use texture from Shug's old yellow dress alongside Celie's texture scraps, this allegorical authoritative image of the two ladies' co existence in a quilt implies their possible significance to one another. Additionally, sewing and quilting speak to a free sort of inventiveness that advances the personality of the protagonist Celie.

The female characters Celie, Shug and Sofia create a social type of sisterhood that rise above their dissimilar encounters to invent a world of their own. Moreover, Alice walker recognizes quilt-making as a process to sisterhood that she identifies as a way to escape oppression and gain liberty. Also quilting helped and paved the way to the major female characters especially Celie to create and rebuild herself and have her own identity as an independent black woman. Hence, quilt-making and sewing play a big and significant role in Ceile’s journey towards self-healing and achievement.

### **3-6 Men as Victims of the Patriarchal System**

The black man in the novel assumes the part of the awful person. According to one perspective, they are the dictators and abusers of women in the patriarchal African American

society. From another perspective, they are the survivors and victims of their own man centric society, where men are the rulers, chiefs and dominators, and everybody acknowledges it, yet they fall victims of their own patriarchy.

In order to assure his place in the family, a man needs to control his kids and spouse. Moreover, this implies that a kid is consistently compelled to choose between his father and mother, which implies a separation between the two sexual demeanors. For this, Young men regularly wind up picking the heterosexuality because of dread and fear of feminization. Additionally, in her book *Critical Theory Today*, Lois Tyson notes that males are the wellspring and head of authority in the traditional male centric society and culture; they also pass the power to their male children. Furthermore, in walker's novel *The Color Purple* the ideal illustration of abuse achieved by heterosexuality in male-dominated society is Celie's husband Mr. Albert who loves Shug, yet he was made to wed other women that his father had chosen. He was too weak to oppose his father's choice and decision. Therefore, he is compelled to keep his relationship with Shug covered up. So he is unable to live as he wants. Hence Mr. Albert gives an ideal model of a hopeless result of male centric and patriarchal society. Also, now he attempts to do something very similar as his dad did to him by meddling with the wedding of his son with Sofia. But when he did not succeed to demolish the wedding, he proceeds to suppress the man centric philosophy to Harpo his son. So like what Mr. Albert gains from his dad, he is like attempting to have total force by controlling his son Harpo and manhandling him , oppressing and mistreating his better half Sofia.

Consequently, the novel does not only demonstrate the survival and oppression of women by a patriarchal system, but also reveals how men are also victimized by their own system. As it is shown with Mr. Albert and Harpo, the latter is controlled by his father, however he is not like him, but his father's implying ideas upon him made him treat his wife as Mr. Albert used to treat Celie and previous wives.

#### 4- Celie's Rebirth: A New Identity

Self-reconstruction is a significant subject in African American writing. Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* is an enlivening model for the self-rebirth of the black female. Walker targets her female readers to a positive change by introducing an effective and successful model who changes from a compliant, submissive and subordinate character to a determinant, spiritually autonomous female. With the assistance of the other female characters who show her how to free and heal herself through spirituality and other means like sexuality and education, Celie could break the shell and impose herself in a world in which she has been having a minimized position.

Celie's change comes progressively in various stages. In each stage, it is revealed how the protagonist begins to communicate, to express herself and split away from the quiet world. The sexually abused and scarcely educated Celie discovers that so as to have an estimation and value in society and in the entire world, one needs to struggle hard. In spite of the fact that at the outset, she isn't persuaded with the idea of fighting, yet, with time she comes to presume that a girl child isn't safe in family of men except if she battles for her own reality and existence.

Celie's liberation offers hope and strength to all the mistreated women. Alice Walker makes her readers live a transformational cycle with subtleties so as to encourage them to take the initial move towards their freedom from male predominance. Celie's letters to God is a way to end the quiet which was forced on her by her stepfather: "You better not never tell nobody" (Walker 1). Though she can't communicate with anyone and her story could not be common, she finds help informing God concerning what is befalling her. Celie's letters give the readers a nearby look to her hopeless life. They are as declaration of unsupportable life;

she portrays the physical and mental brutality she is suffering, both from her stepfather and her husband while she is in a feeble position, accepting all the torment and suffering quietly.

Celie's development and maturity are demonstrated when she offers Harpo a mature response about him controlling his wife, Sofia. She says: "some women can't be beat, I say. Sofia is one of them. Besides, Sofia loves you. She probably be happy to do most of what you say if you as her right. She not mean. She not spiteful. She don't hold a grudge."(Walker 41)

Celie stays in a passive situation for quite a while until she discovers that Mr. Albert had been concealing the letters of Nettie everywhere over the most recent years. This was a groundbreaking and transformational point in Celie's life. Her indignation detonates and she attempts to murder her husband, rebuffing him for doing so. Shug forestalls and advises her to transform her madness into a beneficial creation like making some jeans and cloths. Here, the protagonist begins to discover her ability which will underscore her monetary independence.

Celie's consciousness that she is a part of all the creation is raised when Shug explains and shows her image which encourages her to strengthen her spirituality, religion and faith. In fact, the story's protagonist ,Celie, encounters the real recovery when she understands that she is a piece of the creation and a part of the world, through accepting that to go into the progression of god's inventiveness is to know love and know the importance of selfhood, family.

To finish up, in *The Color Purple*, the topic of Self-healing goes hand in hand with female subjugation that pushes the main character towards her liberation and opens the entryway for her self-articulation after giving her a new perception of spirituality and faith and helping her grow intellectually besides realizing the necessity of fighting in order to obtain her rights .Celie, the heroine, succeeded in her main task and goal of rebuilding her

identity and personality, self and independence. At the end, all the female characters and mainly Celie are free spiritually, mentally and economically.

## **Conclusion**

*The Color Purple* is the narrative of the development and advancement of the main character from an uninformed, mishandled young person to a refined lady who learns, with the assistance of a solid and strong female sisterhood, to support herself and adapt to unfriendly environmental factors. Before the end of the novel, Celie is fully grown-up and responsible for a business, a house and her own life. She has obtained a more profound attention to spirituality and a more extensive comprehension of the idea of God and in particular she cherishes and is adored kindly. *The Color Purple*'s story represents the move on from the old notion of God and religion as a church based Christianity to a more original, deep and spiritual perception of the divine. In other words, Celie goes through the battle of being tricked and disregarded by men in a male centric culture. Because of this, she undertakes a spiritual journey to build up a source of articulation - the female bond.

## **General Conclusion**

## General Conclusion

The notions of spirituality, religion, the divine, faith and God are considered to be very important issues in African American society and culture. Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* is an example of black females' struggle, spiritual and self-achievement, and source of hope, in which the individuals are fighting to keep spirituality present in their every day existence.

Alice Walker's novel *The Color Purple* recounts the tale of the female protagonist's journey as she heals herself, discovers love once more, and endeavors to give absolution to people who have oppressed her. Religion is a significant subject in the novel as it reveals the role of "God" in the female protagonist's self liberation. Despite the fact that Celie had arrived at the resolution that God had relinquished her through her experiences, Celie's sweetheart, Shug persuades her that God has a profound and ground-breaking love for her since she is made in the image of God.

The epistolary novel and theological work *The Color Purple* portrays the characters' journey from religion to spirituality. The protagonist's story began with portraying her negative vision of God as a Christian male-dominated, to finish after many events with a new perception of God as more spiritual than Christian. Alice Walker shows in the preface of the novel that religion and spirituality are the basis and inspiration of her book's story.

Celie's development appeared through different circumstances of her life which she faces. There are essentially three periods of her life which appeared through her letters. In the absolute first stage, Celie appeared as a young lady who is mistreated by her step father at her home and by her husband and spouse's four spoiled youngsters after marriage. As Celie is illegal to impart herself to anybody, she shares her stories of burden to God through letters. In

the subsequent stage, Celie gets mindful of the shamefulness done to her by her husband by not giving over her Nettie's letters.

Through Nettie's letters, Celie comes to realize that Alphonso was not her genuine dad. She goes to another acknowledgment and starts composing letters to Nettie. In the third and last stage, Celie changes altogether. Her idea about God changed. Her discernment about existence also changed. Presently she composes a letter to God with discernment. She addresses God as 'Everything'.

Breaking free from all the things that she had believed in was extremely hard and difficult, as the shift from perceiving God as male-dominant to admiring him as a deep spiritual force and peace is very notable in the novel. The negative vision that Christianity had given to the protagonist Celie made of her a weak, unnoticed, lonely and silent woman whose voice is not heard, yet, redefining this concept by the help of the female characters around her had significantly taken her out of the initial belief. Women like Nettie her sister made her realize how education could release her from that patriarchal society, and how the church religion beliefs are wrong. Shug acted as a magic touch to her soul since she taught Celie what God really is, God is the secret strength and happiness that we hold inside us. Sofia also shows her how a woman can ask for her rights and values.

In a male dominated society, achieving happiness and joy, strength, liberation from abuse and oppression stems from self-determination. Alice Walker made women's communication and empowerment a primary focus in her novel since no one can deny the impact of women's solidarity, quilting and sisterhood in the African Americans' spiritual journey. Yet she demonstrates the fact that men can also be victimized by their own patriarchal system.

The spiritual development and change that occurs in Celie's character and other black women's lives paved the way to Celie's growth; she managed to heal her wounds without being afraid to express her pain. Therefore, it is due to spirituality-achievement that the black



women succeeded to create and rebuild their own identity, spiritually, physically and economically.

As the study's aim is proving that spirituality can be a way to self-healing by redefining the perception of God and religious beliefs of the female characters, it is clearly claimed that the purpose is approved since both the research and the story end up portraying women's achievement of self-identity, esteem, and freedom. In the novel, the example of the African American woman Celie finally raised her voice to approve her presence in life and be a hope for every person believing that spiritual survival can lead to a beautiful end.

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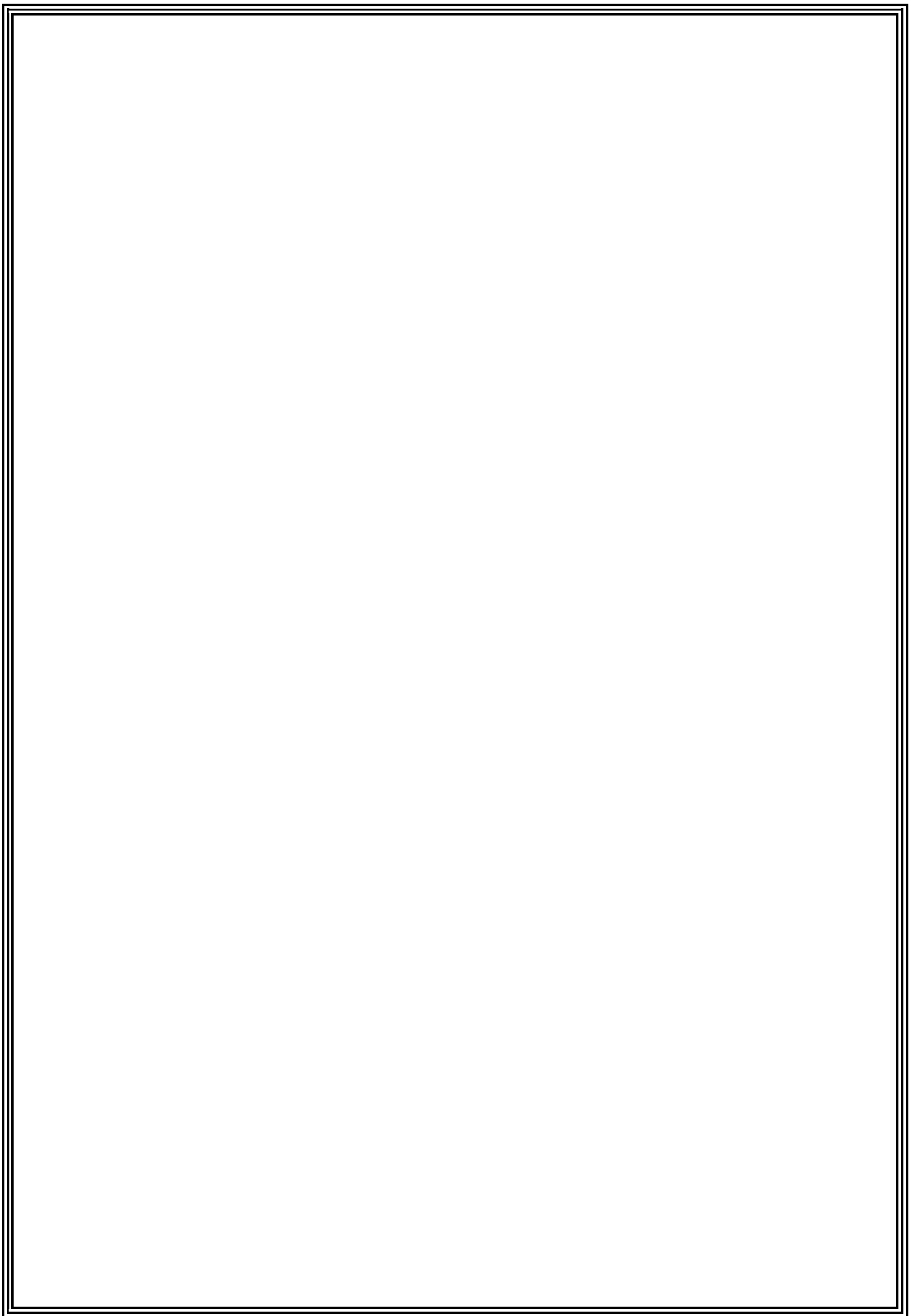
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## Résumé

Le célèbre roman épistolaire d'Alice Walker, *La Couleur Pourpre*, est l'une des contributions littéraires les plus connues de l'auteure qui mettent en lumière de nombreux thèmes sensibles comme l'oppression féminine, le racisme et les rôles des sexes. Ce travail de recherche est explicitement consacré à la quête de la spiritualité, de la religion et de la représentation de l'image de Dieu dans le roman. Il met en évidence le grand rôle de la spiritualité dans la vie des personnages féminins et dans leur accomplissement de l'auto-guérison, et déclame l'expression et la démonstration du divin par Walker qui l'identifie comme la source d'inspiration de son roman. De plus, cette étude est consacrée à la survie spirituelle des femmes noires, car elle vise à examiner le passage de la foi chrétienne traditionnelle à une version spirituelle du divin. Elle montre également dans quelle mesure la fraternité et les liens féminins ont eu un impact sur l'éveil du protagoniste de Walker alors qu'elle s'épanouit spirituellement et s'inspire des femmes qui l'entourent. A la fin du roman, elle devient une âme libérée, une femme confiante, heureuse et indépendante après avoir obtenu sa nouvelle vision de Dieu. Tout cela est démontré en utilisant une perspective postmoderne en référence au livre de Lois Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*.

**Mots clés** : spiritualité, religion, image de Dieu, auto-guérison, femme noire.



*I find my own*

*As a small person*

*A standing self*

*Against the world*

*An equality of wills*

*I finally understand*

*(Alice Walker)*