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Candidate session number			
Candidate name			
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Examination session (May or November)	MAY	Year	2013

Diploma Programme subject in which this extended essay is registered: Literature and Performance
 (For an extended essay in the area of languages, state the language and whether it is group 1 or group 2.) English Group 1

Title of the extended essay: The Transformative Power of
Sisterhood

Candidate's declaration

This declaration must be signed by the candidate; otherwise a grade may not be issued.

The extended essay I am submitting is my own work (apart from guidance allowed by the International Baccalaureate).

I have acknowledged each use of the words, graphics or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual.

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Please comment, as appropriate, on the candidate's performance, the context in which the candidate undertook the research for the extended essay, any difficulties encountered and how these were overcome (see page 13 of the extended essay guide). The concluding interview (viva voce) may provide useful information. These comments can help the examiner award a level for criterion K (holistic judgment). Do not comment on any adverse personal circumstances that may have affected the candidate. If the amount of time spent with the candidate was zero, you must explain this, in particular how it was then possible to authenticate the essay as the candidate's own work. You may attach an additional sheet if there is insufficient space here.

In May of 2012, _____ enthusiastically identified a new, unique area of interest in Literature and Performance (a course which our school does not offer) and consulted the IBO Extended Essay Guide to formulate her research question based on a comparative study of the protagonist's portrayal in Alice Walker's novel, *The Color Purple*, and Steven Spielberg's film adaptation. She was well-prepared to embark on the EE process and began with reading/analyzing the primary text as well as closely viewing the film. I assisted her with obtaining one secondary source of literary criticism, because our access to resource texts in _____ in limited; otherwise, she independently researched both her print and online sources. _____ was proactive in seeking guidance and feedback when necessary, though was generally self-sufficient and required minimal assistance with planning and organizing her essay. She submitted drafts-- prior to her final -- as evidence of progress and authenticity in her work and also met all internal deadlines in a timely and thorough manner. My role as EE supervisor was largely that of a monitor.

_____ 's main weaknesses in her written work were redundancy and some awkward phrasing, which she was able to clarify in our meetings after being verbally questioned as to her meaning. In the viva voce, she responded to questions in an articulate, confident manner and demonstrated a knowledgeable command of the subject matter. Overall, _____ 's essay reflects considerable effort and shows clear evidence of 'intellectual initiative, depth of understanding and insight'. Supervising

_____ 's Extended Essay was a mutually rewarding experience.

This declaration must be signed by the supervisor; otherwise a grade may not be issued.

I have read the final version of the extended essay that will be submitted to the examiner.

To the best of my knowledge, the extended essay is the authentic work of the candidate.

I spent 3/2 hours with the candidate discussing the progress of the extended essay.

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Date:

Assessment form (for examiner use only)

Criteria	Achievement level					
	Examiner 1	maximum	Examiner 2	maximum	Examiner 3	
A research question	2	2		2		
B introduction	2	2		2		
C investigation	3	4		4		
D knowledge and understanding	3	4		4		
E reasoned argument	4	4		4		
F analysis and evaluation	3	4		4		
G use of subject language	4	4		4		
H conclusion	2	2		2		
I formal presentation	4	4		4		
J abstract	2	2		2		
K holistic judgment	3	4		4		
Total out of 36	32					

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

The Transformative Power of Sisterhood

Extended Essay: Literature and Performance

Candidate Number:

2/20/2013

To what extent is the portrayal of Celie's evolution of identity from submissive to autonomous in the novel *The Color Purple*, reflected in her costume design of Steven Spielberg's film adaptation?

Extended Essay Word Count: 3,941

Extended Essay Abstract

In the category Literature and Performance, I designed the following research question:

To what extent is the portrayal of Celie's evolution of identity from being submissive to autonomous in the novel *The Color Purple*, reflected in her costume design in Steven Spielberg's film adaptation?

In order to answer this question, I analyzed the protagonist's, Celie, characterization throughout the novel. I focused my analysis of Celie's evolution, in the novel and film, at points in which Celie both receives and lacked female support. The relationships Celie builds with other woman strongly influences her development as a character. To understand Celie's depiction in the novel, I focused on direct and indirect characterization. I was particularly interested in Celie's change of self-expression which was muted in the exposition as she only wrote about her actions and not feelings, whereas later in the novel, she learned to communicate her true feelings. Correspondingly in the film, Celie's costume design is used to reflect her inner state. Through multiple viewings, I concentrated on costume silhouette, fabrics, textures and critically examined their effects in these particular scenes of the film. This allowed me to understand the evident shift in her emotional state and demeanor. Furthermore, reading critiques of the feminist aspects in Walker's novel helped me find support and counterclaims for my arguments. When answering the research question, I discovered that there are strong correlations between the novel and the film's depiction of Celie's transformation. As Celie is able to build meaningful female friendships, she blossoms into an independent and liberated woman. While characterization is more subtle in film, costume design is crucial in manipulating the audience's perception of the character. In relation to the film, shifts in Celie's costume design draw obvious parallels with the novel, reinforcing Celie's transformation in both.

Word Count: 295

The Transformative Power of Sisterhood

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Introduction

In the southern United States during the early 1900's, inequalities between gender and race had noticeable impacts on individual's lives. In *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker, several of the characters in the novel are victims of racism, sexism and domestic abuse. The novel's setting forms the backdrop in which Walker explores the unbalanced relationship between men and women and how this causes physical, mental and emotional oppression of the novel's female characters. The protagonist Celie is a fitting embodiment of this relationship between men and women of the time and how this is an imposition on her as she experiences abuse and oppression from both her step-father and husband. However, the relationship between other female characters and Celie demonstrates how sisterhood allows her to eventually develop autonomy and free herself from male superiority. In a critique of African American women authors, Mary O'Connor writes, "love between women...can offer revolutionary possibility for change."¹ The effect of sisterhood can also be seen in Steven Spielberg's film adaptation. In the film, use of costume design is based on Celie's actions, which reflect the socio/historic culture and setting in which these actions take place, but most importantly, the identity of Celie. In this film, costume design is a reflection of the character. Like characterization (both direct and indirect) in the novel, costume design alters the way in which the audience is intended to perceive Celie. Therefore, analyzing the shifts in textual characterization and cinematic costume design of the protagonist can be used as indicators to answer the following research question:

To what extent is the portrayal of Celie's evolution of identity from submissive to autonomous in the novel *The Color Purple*, reflected in her costume design in Steven Spielberg's film adaptation?

¹ Zamora, Lois Parkinson. "Mary O'Connor Subject, Voice and Women in Some Contemporary Black American Women's Writing." *Contemporary American women writers: gender, class, ethnicity*. London: Longman, 1998. 33. Print.

Furthermore, the strong correlation between the characterization of Celie in the novel and her costume design in the film adaptation highlight the positive impact sisterhood have on Celie's assertion of identity.

The way people present themselves in public is an aspect of life that is revealing: what we wear projects a certain image about ourselves. In the same way, costume design is used to this effect in portraying and defining characters at a single glance. The exploration and evaluation of literature can also uncover a deeper meaning behind a writer's words and the characters themselves. Looking at literature allows one to understand aspects of society- in particular, the society in which Celie lives. Analyzing the literary and performance facets of *The Color Purple* seems appropriate as they will reveal a deeper meaning of the protagonist's inner self.

In order to investigate and respond to the research question, the following methodology to Celie's development from oppression to liberation will be applied in three progressive stages. Stage One is the portrayal of submissive Celie, Stage Two demonstrates Celie's earlier journey to independence through sisterhood and Stage Three exemplifies Celie's new found identity. In each stage both textual and cinematic evidence will be presented to illustrate how their relationship projects Celie's evolution.

Effects of a Lack of Sisterhood

Oppression in the Novel's Exposition

With reference to the novel *The Color Purple*, it is evident that Celie is inhibited from exploring and asserting her own identity and sovereignty due to male dominance over her. When one considers Celie's awareness of identity, it is obvious that her awareness of self is lowest in the exposition. In later stages of the novel, the relationships that are formed with influential female characters, allow Celie to assert her individuality. However, the opposite reaction occurs when Celie is left with the absence of a female support system. Although the effects are subtle at first, several negative experiences occur after the loss of Celie's mother and sister. Due to Celie's stepfather, Pa seeking sexual gratification (which was expected

of his dying wife), Celie is used as a replacement and objectified as this is the only worth Pa sees in Celie. In essence, if a female support system (in the form of her mother) had been there, Celie would not have had to endure sexual abuse from her stepfather.

A second consequence after her mother's death is that Celie's freedom of choice is taken away from her. This ultimately causes her submissive attitude until the climax of the novel. Celie's two children are a product of Pa's rape and the children are taken from Celie without question and Pa merely says, "You better not tell nobody but God. It'd kill you mammy"² (Walker 3). The protagonist is not given the power to have the choice in keeping her children. This and other recurrences of, "male voices that forbid her to speak"³ very plausibly results in Celie's compliance and inability to acknowledge her individuality through choice (O'Connor 39). Research based on the effects of teenager's ability to choose coincides with Celie's lack of choice in the novel's exposition. Arthur T. Jersild from the Teachers College of Columbia University writes:

*The experience of choosing is an important element in a person's awareness of himself... It is because the experience of choosing that children feel responsible for their actions... Young people believe that they can cultivate their ability to make wise choices (Jersild 26)."*⁴

This statement is limited as it is based on the analysis of adolescents of the contemporary and real world, but the true-to-life setting and scenarios in *The Color Purple* gives reason to believe Celie's adolescence (fourteen years old) is similar to the young people Jersild addresses. Because Celie has little choice, she is initially raised to think she must rely on the decisions of the male figure. Furthermore, Celie is initially stripped of the right to choose and she becomes dependent on the male voice thereby taking away her autonomy and independence.

² Quotes from the novel with incorrect grammar and spelling are a result of the protagonist's vernacular writing style.

³ Zamora, Lois Parkinson. "Mary O'Connor Subject, Voice and Women in Some Contemporary Black American Women's Writing." *Contemporary American women writers: gender, class, ethnicity*. London: Longman, 1998. 39. Print.

⁴ Jersild, Arthur T.. "The Growing Self." *The psychology of adolescence*. 2d ed. New York: Macmillan, 1963. 26.

Reinforcing the loss of female bond is seen in the absence of Nettie when she is banished from Albert's house (Walker 19). Nettie is a character who represents education and her presence validates Celie's feelings of intelligence. Nettie's importance is highlighted as Celie writes to God, "We got to be smart to git away. I know I'm not as pretty or as smart as Nettie, but *she* say I ain't dumb" (11). Consequently, when Nettie is forced to leave, Celie's ability to feel smart vanishes with Nettie. Hence, Nettie as a symbol of education is viewed as a means of escape from Celie's oppressive environment. The practice of denying education to people as a tool for oppression is highlighted in Nettie's experiences with the Olinka tribe : " like white people ...who don't want coloreds to learn"(141) as the Olinka people , "do not believe girls should be educated" (140). Even letters Celie writes to God in the exposition and rising action of the novel demonstrate her reliance on the male figure since, " the God [she] been praying and writing to is a man...trifling, forgetful and lowdown" (173).

It is clear that without a female connection Celie is portrayed as a submissive character who was taught to rely on the male figure and does so subconsciously in her early letters to God. Undoubtedly, the loss of Nettie results in Celie's lack of female companionship. This leaves her silenced, objectified and with no choice.

Mirrored Angst in the Film Adaptation

Transitioning from the novel to the film, Celie's costume design allows the audience to infer the state of her inner self in the exposition. Several costumes in the film's exposition demonstrate how Celie is muted. Figure 1 (page 6) has been chosen for analysis as it demonstrates Celie's subservience to men and how the contrast with Nettie's costume design underscores male oppression Celie experiences.

In the opening Credits of the motion picture *The Color Purple* directed by Steven Spielberg, Celie and her sister Nettie are seen running through a green, lush field of grass with a clear blue sky as a back drop. Celie wears a simple brown dress which falls over her pregnant body, showing no shapely figure with a conservative collared shirt and sleeves that extend to Celie's wrists. This illustrates a, "dramatic rejection

of womanly curves”⁵. Celie’s costume has a loose fitted bodice and ankle-length skirt also conveys her conservative and restricted demeanor. As practical as her costume is for manual labor and a growing body (Walker 10), it is as if the brown dress blends in with her dark skin complexion- essentially muting Celie. But what dramatically emphasizes the oppression seen in the novel is the costume contrast between sisters.

Because Nettie’s light blue and tidy dress complements the mood of the setting, Celie looks out of place- a suggestion of the protagonist’s oppression. Even the body language and position of all three characters shows how Pa views Celie. Celie looks down and faces Pa at an angle suggesting her timidity and subservience in the exposition. Furthermore, Nettie stands directly in front of Pa, making full eye contact with a sassy hand on hip. The assertion Nettie



displays, again juxtaposes Celie’s oppression under the male figure.

Figure 1: Nettie (left), Celie (center) and Pa (right)⁶

The Benefit of Sisterhood for Celie

Sofia’s Influence

Sofia is the lover of Celie’s step-son Harpo. Sofia’s presence in the novel creates a great contrast to Celie’s personality. Even though both characters come from similar backgrounds of domestic abuse, Sofia’s firm and forthright manner differs from Celie’s subservient nature towards male characters, and shows Celie that women can lead their own lives. The relationship of dissimilar characters exposes Celie to the idea that women can have choice in their lives as well. Through Harpo’s abuse of Sofia and her

⁵ Peacock, John. "Introduction." *The 1930s*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1997. 7

⁶ Screenshot from Scene One, “Credits” of *The Color Purple*. Dir. Steven Spielberg. Perf. Whoopi Goldberg, Akosua Busia, Leonard Jackson. 1985. Warner Bros. Pictures, 2003. DVD

subsequent refusal to be mistreated, Celie sees that domestic abuse should not be tolerated. In doing so, Celie learns that rising above the male figure's dominance is possible.

Sofia and Harpo's relationship exemplifies that when men try to conquer women, it leads to calamity. Harpo's attempt to tame Sofia with violence causes the couple's separation because of Harpo's abusive ways (37,64). It becomes clear that Celie recognizes and contemplates Sofia's courageous ways when Celie admits, "I'm jealous of you...you do what I can't." (39).Moreover, Celie eventually demonstrates the desire to be brave and pioneer her own path as Sofia does. Reinforcing this idea, Celie finally curses Albert saying, "until you do right by me, everything you touch will crumble" (187). It is clear that Celie comes to learn that male tyranny is not right.

Sofia's pioneering act further shows Celie how women do not need to rely on men for support. Albert's idea that Sofia is looking for marriage only because she is pregnant is refuted when Sofia insists, "What I need to marry Harpo for? What food and clothes he git, you buy." (32). Listening to every word, Celie hears that women are able to support themselves without looking for help and assistance from men (30). Celie later demonstrates a personal understanding of this when she reimagines God not as a negligent man but, "a It...God is everything" (173-176).

At this point in the novel we see that the relationship with Sofia kindles Celie's ability to start to lead her own life. Principally, this female bond allows Celie to take a glimpse at what it means to be autonomous- a critical first step in Celie's awareness that she does not have to be what men want her to be.

Sofia's Influence and an Analysis of Celie's Costume Design

Sofia's introduction to the plot prompts Celie's costume design begins to take on a slimmer, more form-fitting look. However, this is not very pronounced in regard to the film's treatment at this time in the plot. Several examples of Celie's inchoate transformation can be seen in Scene Twelve *Domestic Dispute*, but

the ideal example is portrayed in Scene Eleven *Harpo and Sofia*, where the whole family meets the bride to be (Sofia) for the first time.



Figure 2: Celie watches as Sofia arrives to the Johnson house. ⁷

Celie wears a plaid blue dress with a skirt presumably at knee length. The mock collar, narrowing waistband and V shape neck line gives the protagonist a more feminine and mature look in a modest way. Seeing Celie in more feminine attire subtly mirrors feminism in novel and film at this point, showing female empowerment. The audience also sees a more mature Celie literally and figuratively- as the shift in her costume design suggests a shift in the character's inner self. However, the simplicity of what Celie wears- slightly oversized clothing and the domestic costume reflects the labor, chores and manual hardship to which Celie still must attend. Although the lack of accessories and

child-like braids/hairstyle seemingly belie the character's shift, this indicates that her steps toward an awakened identity are only just beginning.

Compared to the novel, the contrast between Sofia and Celie in the film as reflected in their costume design is hardly noticeable. Both wear attire that is more fitted to the body but is still practical for their laborious duties. In doing so, the costume design of Spielberg's film adaptation demonstrates a subtle influence Sofia has on Celie. This possibly hints at the small yet progressive shift seen in the protagonist and that Celie's epiphany has not yet been reached. Instead the relationship between the costume designs merely reflects the rising action leading to Celie's turning point in the climax of both film and novel. Overall, both versions of *The Color Purple* demonstrate 'alterations' in the protagonist through the influence of sisterhood. Although the textual evidence demonstrates a more apparent change in Celie in comparison to the costume design in the film, it is still apparent that Celie is undergoing a transformation.

⁷ Screenshot from Scene Eleven, "Harpo and Sofia" of *The Color Purple*. Dir. Steven Spielberg. Perf. Whoopi Goldberg. 1985. Warner Bros. Pictures, 2003. DVD.

Shug Avery's Influence through Textual Evidence

Once again the sisterhood Celie is able to form with other female characters fosters her evolution. The many different forms of love Shug Avery provides Celie give her the ability to develop self-love and happiness. Shug Avery's comfort and familiarity with the body and carnal pleasures also prompts Celie's discovery of herself, which translate in Celie's establishment of pride in herself.

One evening when Shug Avery and Celie are alone, Celie admits to never looking at her genitalia (74). Shocked, Shug Avery tells her to, "take this mirror and go looks at yourself" (74). Although, "to shame even to go off and look" (74), Celie does so and eventually realizes, "it a lot prettier than" she would have thought (75). This indirect characterization shows how Shug Avery teaches Celie to discover herself. In doing so, Celie accepts her body and begins to see herself as beautiful.

Not only does Shug Avery prompt Celie's discovery of her physical body, but shows her a deeper outlook on the meaning of becoming your own person. As a result, Celie gains a new state of mind that is independent of how men in her life viewed her as, "ugly" (10). Even after having intercourse with Albert numerous times, Celie confesses that she, "never enjoy[ed] it" (74). Shug Avery convinces Celie that she is, "still a virgin" (74). This belief that Celie's stolen innocence is able to still be intact fosters a sense of ownership within Celie as well as her ability to start over and become a new woman.

Not only does Shug Avery introduce Celie to these new concepts, but she connects Celie with her past. Shug Avery finds letters from Nettie to Celie that Albert had been hiding all these years. (112,131). Just as Nettie's departure from Celie's life is described as, "happiness desert", Nettie's reintroduction to Celie's life through the form of letters suggests Celie's reconnection with happiness. Even Shug Avery notes that Nettie is, "the only one you ever love...sides me" proving sisterhood as a harbinger of Celie's happiness (108).

It is clear that Shug Avery is more than a substitute for the love of a mother, sister, friend and lover. She reintroduces Celie to these varying relationships and their positive, progressive and constructive impact they have on Celie's assertion of self. It is evident that Shug Avery ignites Celie's journey to self-acceptance of the body and mind and the power of embracing love.

Shug Avery's Influence and an Analysis of Celie's Costume Design

For a period of time during Shug Avery and Celie's initial relationship, the protagonist's costume design



Figure 3: Celie trying on Shug Avery's Performance Dress⁸

still communicated a quieter and understated Celie. But in Scene Eighteen *Miss Celie's Blues*, Celie's dress conveys the same effect Shug Avery has had on her like in the novel. Figure 3, effectively captures this powerful moment and from this point. Celie's costumes continue to become bolder.

Attired in a red sequined dress with a V shape neckline; baring her arms with a sleeveless top and layers of accessories. This costume is a symbol of a bold shift within Celie that has built up to this point. The red choice of color also suggests an association with the physical and emotional love that helped Celie accept herself. Celie wearing Shug Avery's dress

figuratively represents Celie in Shug's skin, which alludes to the sexual experience they shared. This allowed Celie to love herself as someone was able to. The tightly fitted bodice and the exposed negligee underline a more sensual mood and feminine appearance within Celie. Even the accessories project the drastic yet optimistic shift in the protagonist. This is the first time Celie is seen wearing any type of jewelry: a subtle hint to her approach to new things. The hat embroidered with red flowers accentuates the red of the dress, which is an ultimate symbol of love. In this one frame, Celie has developed immensely since the exposition. Both novel and film strongly portray the positive influence Shug Avery has on Celie.

⁸ Screenshot from Scene Eighteen, "Miss Celie's Blue" of *The Color Purple*. Dir. Steven Spielberg. Perf. Whoopi Goldberg. 1985. Warner Bros. Pictures, 2003. DVD.

Turning Point: Celie's Growth and Development as a Result of Sisterhood

The Novel

Ultimately, sisterhood for Celie has a progressively beneficial influence on her development and affirmation of identity. After Sofia and Shug Avery influence Celie, there are changes in Celie's writing style, her relationship with Albert and the fact that she establishes her own business all demonstrate her transformation.

Opening her own pants business, Celie demonstrates her independence (192). Ironically and symbolically, Celie was concerned that pants provoke a reaction from her husband such as, "not [letting] his wife wear pants" (131). Yet she continues, suggesting confidence in her ability to take charge of her business. Celie defies societal norms by challenging that only, "men spose to wear pants" (192). Pursuing her pants business suggests Celie's new found identity and inner strength as she literally makes clothes for herself and others- a metaphor that one can make their own identity.

Celie's awakened identity is also evident in the content of her letters; by the end of the novel she writes based on her analysis of her emotions (244). This acknowledgment of her own feelings demonstrates Celie's heightened self-awareness. Because of this, the protagonist is indirectly characterized as more candid and recognizes the value of her own thoughts. Not only does the content of the letters shift, but to whom these letters are addressed also changes (173). Celie's leaves behind a God that was, "like all other mens" (173), and adopts a, "God that is everything" (176). Abandonment of such a God who is a symbol of the negligent male figure demonstrates Celie's independence and self-sufficiency (173). The modifications in Celie's letters reflect a developing autonomous woman.

Additionally, Celie projects leadership in her own life through her interaction with Albert. In the midst of dinner at Odessa's house (179), Celie speaks out against her husband and exclaims, "It's time to leave you and enter Creation" (180). Not only does Celie embody courage, similar to Sofia (who spoke out

against her husband), but the reference to “creation” signifies Celie is finally ready to follow her own figurative path. Celie also projects that she is able to reinvent herself by using the word “creation”, despite the recurring male voices telling her otherwise. When Celie exclaims to Albert, “I’m pore, I’m black, I may be ugly and can’t cook...But *I’m here*” (187), all of Albert’s oppressive discourse is, “defeated by[Celie’s] existence ” (O’Connor 38)⁹. Celie demonstrates she not only has self-awareness, but her presence should be fully acknowledged as well (39).

Evidence from the Costume Design

After years of undergoing transformation, Celie blossoms by the end of the film. The notion that Celie has been able to develop from the exposition is Celie’s growth since the exposition is also emphasized in the motif of flowers depicted on her dresses. An ideal example is in Scene Thirty-Seven “*Miss Celie’s Blues, Maybe God is Tryin’*



Figure 4: Sofia(left), Celie(right) ¹⁰

to tell You Somethin.”. In Figure 4, the flowers depicted on Celie’s dress are in full bloom, with their petals completely extended which conveys Celie’s complete transformation. Her elaborate hat, with layers of texture(such as rose and feather on the hat which may symbolized the blossoming of a new person and freedom associated with flight) and material suggest a more opulent and confident Celie, plausibly from her successful pant-making business. But even more, the gold rose emblem on her hat supports Celie’s development. Even Sofia’s floral dress complements that of Celie’s costume design. In western culture, a rose is associated with love. Therefore, Celie is literally adorned with love from the sisterhood

⁹ Zamora, Lois Parkinson. "Mary O'Connor Subject, Voice and Women in Some Contemporary Black American Women's Writing." *Contemporary American women writers: gender, class, ethnicity*. London: Longman, 1998. 39

¹⁰ Screenshot from Scene Thirty Seven, “*Miss Celie’s Blue, Maybe God Is Tryin’ to Tell You Somthin*” of *The Color Purple*. Dir. Steven Spielberg. Perf. Whoopi Goldberg, Oprah Winfrey. 1985. Warner Bros. Pictures, 2003. DVD.

she has acquired over the years. The presence of gold jewelry on her neck and ears again portrays a character who now has acquired wealth of riches and love.

Conclusion

Both novel and film illustrate how a lack of sisterhood initially translates in Celie's submission and dependence on the male figure. Overtime Celie demonstrates the desire for freedom from the tyranny of men. The textual and cinematic evidence further show how Sofia and Shug Avery ignite and support Celie's ultimate evolution towards independence. Progressively, the shift in the protagonist's characterization and costume design reflect such a change. When comparing Celie's definitive transformation to a flower in bloom, textual evidence demonstrates how Sofia and Shug Avery's influence Celie's sovereign actions. In conjunction with the film adaptation, Celie's costume designs in the plot's climax and falling action use a flower motif to exemplify full transformation. Therefore, female bonds strongly influence Celie's development of a new identity and autonomy.

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