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Contradictory Representations of Diversity: Gender Treachery and the Color-Blind Gileadean Society

Abstract: When speaking of the Hulu adaptation of *The Handmaid's Tale*, Bruce Miller's decision to expand the narrative of Margaret Atwood's work was not restricted to expanding the overall plot of the novel. In his version of the famous dystopia, Miller's adaptation offers its audience the (apparent) diverse representation that the original novel lacks: characters who were clearly written as white by Atwood have been racially diversified, while one particular character whose storyline is cut short in the novel is given an entire new arc and consequently becomes the show's second openly lesbian character. While this should be seen as a positive change, the purpose of this paper is to argue that the Hulu adaptation has a diversity problem: the way it depicts its racial minorities, or rather the way it does not actually depict them as racially diverse characters. In order to prove that the adaptation's representation of its diverse characters is contradictory, I take a look at how homophobic and racist discourses have been interlinked throughout the centuries; this highlights the illogicality of the show's decision to depict Gilead as color-blind, all while retaining the brutal discrimination against its sexual minorities. However, the adaptation's apparent color-blindness seems to be performative: although it wishes to present Gilead as post-racial, the series' non-white-character continue to fall prey to racial discrimination, which can be clearly seen in the characterization of Moira, the show's best represented non-white character, when compared to the show's white characters, heterosexual or not.

Keywords: color-blindness, racial diversity, systemic racism, queer representation, white privilege