

My Name is Offred: Autoethnographic Studies in Conversion Therapy and Torture in The Handmaid's Tale

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Abstract

Much has been written on *The Handmaid's Tale* and its impact on gender studies, however there is a gap in the scholarship surrounding personal experiences as they relate to the events and characters of the novel. Within the novel, trauma is used as a means of brainwashing on the handmaids and the same can be said of my experience as a queer teen in religious conversion therapy. Many theorists have looked at the importance of the novel on society and its impact upon recent events, but few are introspective. Utilizing textual intervention and autoethnography as a means of inserting myself into the novel through short reflective memoirs and Biblical passages, this paper explores performative and trauma theories to shed light on the lived experiences of Atwood's audience. This paper highlights the importance of textual intervention and the necessity of banning conversion therapy. The theories here posed encourage future scholars to explore their own trauma alongside texts of their choice as a means of finding closure and breaking silence.

Keywords: autoethnographic, handmaid's tale