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Close Reading Organizer - Chapter 19 **Sample Answers**

Directions: Read each summary entry and think about which themes listed in the Themes Key apply to it, then color in those themes in the Theme Tracker. Next, write a few sentences of Analysis to explain how the themes you chose apply to each summary section.

Note: There is not always a definitive set of “correct” answers for which themes should appear in the Theme Tracker. Answers that differ from the ones we propose below should therefore not automatically be treated as incorrect, and in fact can serve as great discussion starters.

Themes Key

- 1 Gender Roles
- 2 Religion and Theocracy
- 3 Fertility
- 4 Rebellion
- 5 Love
- 6 Storytelling and Memory

Summary	Theme Tracker						Your Analysis
<p>Offred dreams first that she has seen and picked up her daughter, and then that her mother has come to take care of her. When she truly wakes up, she wonders if she’s been drugged. She sits on the Faith cushion and slowly eats breakfast, noting that her eggcup looks like a skirt, and taking pleasure in the beautiful egg.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<p>After the night’s surprising moment of connection with Nick, Offred dreams of other connections with loved ones. The egg wearing a skirt is an amusing reminder of the household’s hopes for, and the way it views, Offred.</p>
<p>A red van, a Birthmobile, comes to the house to pick up Offred. A Guardian drives her and several other Handmaids to Ofwarren’s (Janine’s)</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<p>Gilead’s laws are less strict towards Handmaids on Birth Days, which demonstrates Gilead’s canny balancing of restriction and release, to</p>

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<p>house for her birth. One of the other handmaids cries with joy. The Handmaids are allowed more freedom than usual in their behavior on birth days.</p>							<p>ensure that Handmaid life is tolerable.</p>
<p>Offred knows that the chance of a healthy, living, normal-bodied baby is just one in four, because of many different problems that lead to sterility: radiation and pollution, atomic power plant mishaps, pesticides, syphilis, birth control pills, and women having their tubes tied. Offred remembers Aunt Lydia scorning the women who sterilized themselves and calling them Jezebels.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<p>The blights that led to Gilead's fertility issues relate both to environmental issues and issues relating to the sexual liberation of the 1960's. Unsurprisingly, women get the blame for trying to control the results of their sexual activity.</p>
<p>Offred goes deeper into her flashback from the Rachel and Leah Center. She remembers Aunt Lydia explaining that some women self-sterilized because they thought the world was ending. Offred's school desk had love messages carved into it, but none after the mid-eighties, when schools were closing because there weren't enough children. As Aunt Lydia talks about the Handmaids' importance, Offred wants to kill her.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<p>Offred's rage at Aunt Lydia about these issues could have several sources. Offred may be particularly upset that Aunt Lydia is criticizing women for trying to be responsible. Or perhaps Offred regrets the loss of freedom and love that the desk carvings represent.</p>
<p>Back in the present day, the Birthmobile arrives at Ofwarren's house, and we learn that Ofwarren is</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<p>Throughout the book, we'll see Offred's shocking lack of sympathy for Janine. Janine isn't even</p>

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<p>Janine, whom Offred disdains and thinks of as a “whiny bitch.” Women must give birth without painkillers or medical intervention because that’s what’s in the bible.</p>							<p>necessarily a true believer, but she’s weak-willed, and Offred finds that even more deplorable.</p>
<p>Offred imagines how the Wives talk about the Handmaids. One might say that a Handmaid is like a daughter to her, but the others talk about the Handmaids as pesky animals or objects who are not to be trusted.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<p>Though Offred dislikes the Wives for disdaining the Handmaids, Offred holds similar opinions towards Janine.</p>