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Close Reading Organizer - Chapter 21 **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>Back at Janine’s birth room, there’s a stuffy, bloody, animalistic smell. The Handmaids chant breathing instructions. They pass cups of grape juice to each other and manage to whisper to each other as they do so. Offred asks the Handmaid next to her if she knows Moira, but she doesn’t. Offred, too, feels pain like she’s about to give birth, as Aunt Elizabeth taught the Handmaids to do.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<p>For once, Offred doesn’t fret so much about a small act of rebellion, and asks after Moira without worrying that the other Handmaid might be an Eye. This demonstrates the rare feeling of freedom and community on birth days.</p>
<p>Janine walks around distractedly, and poops in a portable toilet in the</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<p>Despite all the pleasant symbols of fruits and flowers, the actual scene of</p>

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<p>middle of the room. Offred knows this is her second baby. Their juice had alcohol in it, which the Wives will pretend not to notice. Janine starts to scream and Aunt Elizabeth prepares the two-seat birthing stool. The Wife of Warren comes in and sits on the upper seat, apparently conscious of the Handmaid's hostility towards her.</p>							<p>birth is crude, intimate, and risky. The Handmaid system seems to break down into ridiculousness. It's clear who's doing the work, and who's faking, and yet Gilead attempts to deny the reality of the situation, to create a ceremony that allows the Wives to assert an emotional bond with the baby while the Handmaid is treated as just a body.</p>
<p>The Handmaids feel as though they are one with Janine as the baby comes out. The baby, a girl, seems to be healthy and normal, and the Handmaids smile as one. Offred remembers her and Luke's joy when she gave birth to her daughter.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<p>For the first time, Offred willingly and effortlessly enters into exactly the state of mind that Gilead wants her to. The joy and community of the moment make Gilead seem temporarily utopian.</p>
<p>Warren's Wife lies on the bed holding the baby, and the other Wives crowd enviously around. Warren's Wife names the baby Angela. Meanwhile, the Handmaids block Janine's view of the bed, as Janine cries. After a few months of nursing she'll change households, and for her good work she won't be called an Unwoman and brought to the Colonies.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<p>The spell quickly breaks as Gilead's hierarchies return. Janine won't be able to love her baby, but will be shuffled along to more duty. The scene demonstrates how society, not biology, determines family and reverence.</p>
<p>The Birthmobile brings the Handmaids back home. Offred feels fake milk in her breasts. Offred ponders her own lack of</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<p>This short but important passage again melds feminism and Gilead, and shows that neither is purely good or evil.</p>

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success. She thinks of her **mother**, who “wanted a women’s culture,” which has in a way been achieved.

