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Close Reading Organizer - Chapter 5 **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
Offred and Ofglen continue on their shopping walk, passing beautifully maintained but childless neighborhoods in the center of the Republic of Gilead, an area formerly occupied by the professors of the now closed Harvard University. Offred remembers walking here with Luke , dreaming about having children and buying a big house.	1	2	3	4	5	6	As in the gym scene at the book’s beginning, Offred compares the present with the romantic past. Notably, both the first scene and this one take place at repurposed schools (a high school, and Harvard), suggesting how Gilead does not value such education.
Offred remembers the time before women were protected, both the constant precautions she had to take with men, and	1	2	3	4	5	6	This is the first of many instances where Offred acknowledges that the past is not perfect, and that Gilead has, from a certain

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the freedom to choose her own clothes and spend money. She remembers Aunt Lydia defining the current situation as “Freedom from,” instead of “Freedom to.”							point of view, made improvements.
Offred and Ofglen pass the clothing store called Lilies of the Field, which has an image instead of a sign, because reading is illegal for women. They go to the similarly image-labeled grocery store Milk and Honey, which today has rare oranges in stock. A pregnant Handmaid comes in, and the other Handmaids are excited and jealous. The pregnant Handmaid seems to be showing off. Offred thinks her belly resembles a fruit. Offred realizes that the pregnant woman is Janine , whom she knew in the Red Center (also called the Rachel and Leah Center).	1	2	3	4	5	6	That the Biblical name of the grocery store (“Milk and Honey” comes from a description of Israel’s wonderful fertility, in Exodus), as well as the fact that women aren’t allowed to read, further illuminate Gilead’s two prime interests: suppressing women, and basing the new laws on the Bible.
Offred and Ofglen go to the meat store, called All Flesh. Offred gets a chicken wrapped in paper. Plastic bags are rare now but she remembers when they were abundant. She remembers Luke telling her to be careful about storing them, for their daughter’s protection.	1	2	3	4	5	6	This passage shows the stream-of-consciousness ease with which Offred slips into memories. She seems to live half in Gilead, and half in the past. Only in memory does she have any sort of freedom.
A group of possibly Japanese tourists approaches on the street.	1	2	3	4	5	6	Offred has an important moment of self-awareness when she understands that

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<p>Offred stares at the women's knee-length skirts and high heels, thinking that the shoes look like torture devices. The women also have bare hair and red lipstick. Offred and Ofglen are interested but disgusted, and Offred realizes her ideas about this kind of clothing have changed very quickly.</p>							<p>she used to dress like the women she now finds repulsive. She understands how successfully Gilead has molded her mind, though she can't overthrow her new opinions.</p>
<p>The interpreter, with a winged eye pin, asks if the tourists can take pictures of Offred and Ofglen. Offred denies the request, remembering that Aunt Lydia told the Handmaids to be invisible. Offred suspects that the tour guide might be an Eye. The tourists want to know if the Handmaids are happy, and Offred says yes.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<p>Just like Offred's confused reaction to Nick's seemingly friendly wink, we see Gilead's power to make Offred so afraid and paranoid that she follows all the laws.</p>