

Labor- Paris Paloma

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jvU4xWsN7-A>

This song is about the work and labor that men put on the backs of women in our society. It represents the experience of women in Gilead, who are forced to fit into roles to benefit the men in power. One lyric from Labor is, “24/7, baby machine. So he can live out his picket fence dreams. It's not an act of love if you make her. You make me do too much labour” This song explains expectations a man has for a woman and the systematicness and lack of love behind intimacy in this relationship. It details exactly what the Handmaids are required to do. They're literally treated as baby machines, and that's the only role that they're allowed to have. In *The Handmaid's Tale* this idea is explicitly expressed through the slogan they must chant, “From each, says the slogan, according to her ability to each according to his needs.” (117). The women are required to do whatever they are able to do to fulfill the needs of the men. This quote originated from Marx to explain a communist system of labor distribution, but the pronouns were changed to show the systemic disempowerment of women working for men in Gilead.

Spinning Room- Ani DiFranco

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AnI1MI36Drg>

This song is about a woman laying in bed feeling the weight of her life. There are many similar scenes in *The Handmaid's Tale* that depict Offred laying in bed reflecting on her life and trying not to think about the terror of her current situation. Offred explains, “Nothing takes place in the bed but sleep; or no sleep. I try not to think too much. Like other things now, thought must be rationed. There's a lot that doesn't bear thinking about. Thinking can hurt your chances, and I intend to last.”(9). She perceives thought to be dangerous because if she thinks too much she'll process how upsetting her reality is. This theme also comes across in the Ani DiFranco song, as she sings, “But I lay down, Under sheets of concrete, And I can't get the weight of it, Off my mind”. Similar to the book, she's describing trying not to think about the painful realities of life while laying in bed at night. The experience of being left alone with one's thoughts and feelings is a theme throughout this song and book.

Girl is a Gun- Halsey

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vVjCXsfWsUE>

This song makes me think of Moira in the scene where she threatens Aunt Elizabeth in order to run away from the Red Center. The song is powerful sounding, and Offred always seems to describe Moira as rather brave and powerful. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, Offred pictures Moira threatening Aunt Elizabeth to sound like, “I could kill you, you know, said Moira, when Aunt Elizabeth was safely stowed out of sight behind the furnace. I could injure you badly so you would never feel good in your body again.”(132). Moira uses this tactic of violence and intimidation to run away from her life being

controlled by others and being required to have children. The song *Girl is a Gun* shares the theme of women freeing themselves from the control of men. One of the lyrics that shows this is, "I won't have your baby. Stop 'cause you're killing my vibe. It's a shot in the dark. I'm not a walk in the park. I come loaded with the safety switched off. This girl is a gun". The song literally says "I won't have your baby" which is part of Moira's reason for freeing herself. Also the comparison between herself and a gun, in the song, elicits ideas about violence as a means of freedom, which represents Moira running away from the Red Room.

This is What the Drugs are For- Gracie Abrams

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0pcQsbUcOo>

This song is about deep sadness and longing for someone who is gone. It reminds me of the moments that Offred thinks of Luke and her daughter, and the overwhelming pain this causes her. The song goes, "Now I feel you in my room, Haven't seen you in a lifetime, What am I supposed to do, When you used to be my lifeline?, I've counted all the days, Since you walked away, Look, now I'm alone again, I've gotten used to sleepin' here without you, Though I've tried, I can't pretend, That I don't sit around and think about you, When all I ever do is think about you" The song describes laying in bed and feeling lonely which is very similar to the scenes in *The Handmaid's Tale* where Offred lays in bed alone, missing her daughter and Luke. There's a very haunting quality to the song which is definitely the vibe of this storyline. Also the song is called "This is What the Drugs are For" and Offred believes she was drugged in order to forget her child being taken away, so the idea of drugs unsuccessfully easing sadness is reflected in both works.

Risk- Gracie Abrams

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TiMuT2BhwO0>

This song reminds me of the budding secretive friendship between The Commander and Offred. They both know it's dangerous but they're drawn to each other for companionship. Offred finds herself thinking about him frequently and feels confused about her feelings for him. Offred thinks to herself, "But even so, and stupidly enough, I'm happier than I was before. It's something to do, for one thing. Something to fill the time, at night, instead of sitting alone in my room. It's something else to think about. I don't love the Commander or anything like it, but he's of interest to me." She realizes that her feelings for The Commander are rebellious in Gilead, but it makes her feel good. The Gracie Abrams song has a similar message to this, about jumping into a risky situation with romantic undertones. One of the lines of the song is, "God, I'm actually invested, Haven't even met him, Watch this be the wrong thing Classic, God, I'm jumping in the deep end, It's more fun to swim in, Heard the risk is drownin', but I'm gonna take it". The song expresses the idea that she's surprised by her investment in a guy, which Offred seems to experience with her feelings about her time with The Commander. Also the song carries the same theme of Offred knowing that seeing the commander is a risk but she thinks it's worth taking.