

Our class discussion and analysis of *The Handmaid's Tale* has centered heavily on literary, thematic analysis -- for this assignment, you are invited to use our close reading skills to make more personal and creative connections. You will turn in **TWO lit logs** to help you to synthesize and process what you've read and deepen your understanding of the novel. There are four prompts -- choose any two to complete.

#### Each Lit Log should:

- Present your unique, insightful, specific response to the prompt - the opposite of generic
- Include evidence of close reading -- multiple direct quotes from the text (with page numbers)
- meet a target length of 750 words
- Have an engaging title
- be posted on the class Slate blog on the date it is due
- be submitted as a link on Canvas for credit

#### LIT LOG DUE DATES

#1 - Monday, 9/29

#2 - Monday, 10/12

(Respond to a different prompt for each deadline)

#### Lit Log Assignment Options

1. Track your own intellectual and emotional experience through a **close reading** of a particular section. You are encouraged to tackle sections that you have found confusing, uncomfortable, or intriguing. You can write this in first person, citing specific examples from this selection as well as other parts of the novel that connect these ideas. Your selected text can be as short as one sentence or paragraph, and should not be from one of the sections we've used as an all-class close reading.
2. Create a **visual representation** of a scene or a moment from the reading. Include a write-up explanation of the piece. What is your artwork about? Why did you make the choices you made to create the scene in this way? What is portrayed in your scene and why is it significant? (500 word count minimum for the artist's statement, separate from artwork)
3. Write a **reader response** journal entry. What about this selection resonates with you? What connections can you make to your own life and personal history? Cite specific examples from the selection, as well as specific stories from your life and experiences, then discuss why you react to them the way you do.
4. Even though music is entirely absent from Gilead, make a **playlist** for what you've been reading. Identify five songs that you would include as connections to specific moments, characters, motifs, or themes of the novel. For each song, write an explanation analyzing how the song connects to events in the novel using specific textual evidence to cite the novel. This submission must include an audio component: you may select to record your entire analysis including clips from the songs into a single file, or you may choose to add playable YouTube links into your Slate post. (Please do not research the Hulu show and pull from its playlist. This will bum us out and earn an automatic zero.)

### Rubric for Grading (Each Lit Log is worth 20 total points)

An assignment that **exceeds expectations**:

**DESIGN** // Lit Log engages with the prompt in a specific, insightful way, avoiding generic and surface-level commentary.

**KNOWLEDGE** // All claims and evidence are accurate and text-based.

**APPLICATION** // Writer demonstrates “reading between the lines” of the text; close reading is evident in deep analysis.

**PRESENTATION** // Lit Log is the appropriate length and format, has an engaging title, and is proofread to be free of errors in grammar and mechanics.

**PROCESS** // Thorough evidence of your original thought and composition process -- including hand-written notes -- is included in this google doc template. (Projects without this will not be scored.)

**PROCESS DOCUMENTATION** -- in this box, include evidence of your mind at work: brainstormers or partial drafts in your class notebook, rough drafts of artwork, typed stream-of-consciousness while you listen to potential playlist songs, etc.

- I wanted to use songs I personally like(which are kendrick lamar). I wanted to have fun with this writing and I wanted to find a way to enjoy writing this.
- “It pleases me to ponder this message. It pleases me to think I am communicating with her, this unknown woman”(Page 52)
- “I would like to believe this is a story I’m telling. I need to believe it. I must believe it. Those who can believe that such stories are only have a better chance”(Page 39)
- “Her Fault, her fault, her fault” (Page 72)
- Songs to Use
  - DNA
  - Alright
  - Humble
  - The Blacker the Berry
  - Swimming Pools (Drank)

Lit Log Final Draft Here(First Paragraph Pasted from another doc. Link here [Lit Log #1](#)):

In Margaret Atwoods's *The Handmaid's Tale*, the first twenty chapters introduce readers to the rigid, suffocating world of Gilead, a theocracy that polices women's bodies, identities and memories. Offred, the narrator, survives by holding onto language, memory and humor. Even though music isn't shown from Gilead's official culture, I wanted to put together a Kendrick Lamar playlist to represent Gilead. Kendrick is like Gilead because they both show oppression, survival, and identity just like *The Handmaid's* own experiences. Five songs that really stick out to me are "Alright", "DNA", "The Blacker the Berry", "HUMBLE" and "Swimming Pools(Drank)". It serves as an echo of Offred's voice, showing how her inner resistance grows against the attempts to silence her.

When Offred discovers the Latin phrase that was scratched into the wall (*Nolite te bastardes carborundorum*) she sees it as a lifeline. She admits, "It pleases me to ponder this message. It pleases me to think I am communicating with her, this unknown woman"(Page 52). The phrase becomes a way of asserting that she can survive even in secrecy. Kendrick Lamar's "Alright" echoes this mood of hope. In the song he repeatedly says "We gon be alright." Like Offred, it is a line that offers survival against all odds, not by denying any struggles or hardships but by naming it and pushing forward anyway. Both the song and the line scratched in the wall shows despair through a rhythm and repetition, a beat, a phrase, and sign of persistence.

One of Gilead's most cruel tactics is stripping women of their names and replacing them with nicknames (like Offred). Yet Offred insists on remembering who she once was: a mother, a wife, a friend. She recalls her daughter's smile, her friend Moria's daring and every small detail of her old life." I would like to believe this is a story I'm telling. I need to believe it. I must believe it. Those who can believe that such stories are only stories have a better chance"(Page 39). Kendrick Lamar's *DNA* shows identity that can't be erased. "I got loyalty, got royalty inside my DNA." The lyrics show that no matter what the outside attempts to define or confine him, For Offred, her memories function as her DNA Gilead can rename her, but not memories of her past, her Luke, her Maria or her daughter can't be erased. In both the novel and song, the inner theme is Identity.

In Chapter 13, the Handmaids attend a grotesque "Testifying" where a woman named Janine is forced to recount being gang-raped. Instead of sympathy, Aunt Lynda instructs the Handmaids to chant "Her Fault, her fault, her fault"(Page 72). This moment symbolizes the system's cruelty and how women are dehumanized and reduced to their sexual functions. Kendrick Lamar's "The Blacker the Berry" voices raw anger at systematic oppression. "You hate me, don't you? You have my people, your plan is to terminate my culture." The intensity of the song resonates with the Handmaids reality. Just

as Kendrick Lamar exposes the hypocrisy of a society that blames and punishes marginalized people for their suffering, Atwood shows a regime where women are blamed for the violence committed against them. Both works demand recognition of systematic brutality.

“Blessed are the meek,” Aunt Lyndua tells the handmaids, twisting scripture into a weapon (Page 33). Offred notes that the incompleteness of the command “she didn’t say anything about inheriting the earth.” Meekness in Gilead is not voluntary; it is enforced through punishment, surveillance, and ritual. Kendrick Lamar’s “HUMBLE” becomes ironic in this setting. The song “Sit down, be humble” mirrors the way Gilead insists on silencing women. While Kendrick uses it as a provocation, in Gilead the phrase becomes a demand for total submission. Read against Aunt Lyndua’s sermons, the track underscores the performance of humility that the Handmaids are forced to embody.

Offred normally retreats into her memories of life before Gilead, even when they pain her. When she recalls Luke or her daughter, she admits, “When I think about having sex with Luke, I remember feeling, not love so much as relief” (Page 68). These mental escapes are her form of intoxication: they show the constant terror of her present. Kendrick Lamar’s “Swimming Pools (Drank)” explores the temptation of drowning one’s pain in alcohol: “Why you babysitting only two or three shots? Ima show you how to turn it up a notch.” While Offred has no actual alcohol, her imagination and memory function as her coping mechanism, her drink. Like Kendrick, she recognizes both the relief and danger of this form of escape.

Together, both Kendrick Lamar and The Handmaid’s Tale remind us that even in the darkest systems, rhythms and resistance endure, there are always survival ways and survival strategies.

Link to Songs

▶ [Alright](#)

▶ [DNA.](#)

▶ [HUMBLE.](#)

▶ [Swimming Pools \(Drank\)](#)

▶ [The Blacker The Berry](#)