

MARILYNNE ROBINSON'S *GILEAD*: THE FIRST DECADE OF SCHOLARSHIP

BY JUSTIN KEENA

As of 2015, Marilynne Robinson's Pulitzer-Prize-winning novel *Gilead* (2004) has received far more mainstream acclaim than scholarly attention. The novel has developed a warm and devoted following from religious and non-religious readers alike, in both the United States and abroad; mainstream publications have, for the most part, reviewed it in glowing terms (*Entertainment Weekly's* Lisa Schwarzbaum, for example, gushes with typical praise: "There are two groups of readers who can feel blessed by the arrival of Marilynne Robinson's incandescent second novel, *Gilead*—those who remember where they were when they first fell in love with *Housekeeping*, her breathtaking 1980 debut, and everyone else"); and Robinson's own promotion of the book, from BBC Radio interviews to public readings easily accessible online as videos or podcasts to Library of Congress National Book Festival appearances to a well-publicized conversation in September 2015 with Barack Obama (one of whose favorite books, according to his public Facebook page, is *Gilead*)—all this promotion has been extensive and effective. Attention from within the academy, while steady on a year-to-year basis with a few notable spikes of increased interest, is in comparison sedate and modest. Since 2005, eight out of the eleven years that academics have been publishing on *Gilead* have averaged 1.75 publications annually: that is to say, at most a humble two pieces per year have appeared, with the numbers more or less evenly distributed across each of those years (see Appendix I). The three exceptional years, all of which have come in the last half-decade (2010, 2014, and 2015), which perhaps indicates a trajectory of increased publication rate in the years to come, have each witnessed either a journal issue dedicated to Robinson's work (*Christianity and Literature* 59.2 in 2010 and *Renascence* 66.2 in 2014) or, most recently, an entire book (*This Life, This World: New Essays on Marilynne Robinson's Housekeeping, Gilead, and Home* in 2015). These three years average 8.3 individual articles/essays. Overall, then, from 2005–2015 *Gilead*

scholarship averages 3.55 items per year: a small figure, perhaps, in comparison to the glamour and immensity of its reception in popular culture (or, to compare apples with apples, to the voluminous annual secondary literature of more established American authors within the academy such as Hemingway, Fitzgerald, or Faulkner); but it is remarkable that Robinson's work has attracted as much attention as it has in both spheres so quickly. The academic reception of *Gilead*, however, is my particular focus here. I will analyze the first decade of *Gilead* scholarship (or, to be exact, its first eleven years) in two ways: first chronologically, and then thematically. Taking this approach, both the overall shape of its development over time, as well as the particular ideas that have received most attention from scholars (an account of which must constantly interrupt any diachronic narrative), will each receive the attention they deserve.

The earliest non-review publication on *Gilead* comes in 2005, and belongs to a small sub-genre that straddles the line between scholarly and popular. I mean Amy Lignitz Harken and Lee Hull Moses's study guide *Gifts of Gilead*. On the one hand, this slender 106-page volume is aimed at a popular, religious audience: it is part of Chalice Press's "Popular Insights" series, and is classified as a "Bible Study" on the back cover. It includes questions for discussion at the end of each chapter, as well as reflections and suggestions for daily Christian living. On the other hand, the book shares, at least in part, the same goals as academic scholarship and attempts many of the same tasks: "Our hope is that this study guide will help you appreciate *Gilead*, and perhaps read it on a deeper level. We have tried to explain obscure scriptural references, provide basic background for theological issues raised, and refresh your memory about some of the historical events" (3). I include Harken and Moses's work (but only theirs) in my survey of academic literature on *Gilead* as the earliest, longest, and most insightful specimen of the "study guide" subfield that has since expanded to include the much less substantial 16-page *Gilead by Marilynne Robinson: Notes* (2007) by Leonie Barber and the 35-page *A Study Guide for Marilynne Robinson's Gilead* (2015) in Gale's "Novels for Students" series.

By 2006, though many popular outlets had already reviewed and recommended *Gilead* in a more timely fashion, the novel was just being recognized and reviewed by academic journals. By the end of this year, the only publications since *Gifts of Gilead* are three journal reviews of varying length and purpose. Lanny Peters reviews the book as a pastor himself, appreciating that Ames is not a caricature; Sanford Pinsker strays into more reflective territory, reviewing it alongside, and in contrast to, *The Da Vinci Code*; and Betty Mensch takes a similar approach when she analyzes *Gilead* in tandem with a recent biography of Jonathan Edwards. Peters's review is a straightforward, brief description and evaluation (that is to say, a typical review); Pinsker's piece is, genre-wise, in between a review and an essay, equal parts evaluation and contextualization; and Mensch's review essay is essentially an article, though its insight into *Gilead* as a work of art is minimal (as its connections with Jonathan Edwards's theology are, as she admits herself, tenuous).

Academic articles proper do not begin until 2007 with Laura Tanner's "Looking Back from the Grave': Sensory Perception and the Anticipation of Absence in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*." This was followed by a piece from Todd Shy (2007) on how Robinson's Calvinism in her essay collection *The Death of Adam* (1998) is clarified by *Gilead*, as well as a forgettable short essay (which is, in fact, no more than an extended plot synopsis of *Gilead*) by Leah Gordon (2008). However, the scholarly conversation—that is to say, a dialogue responding to, correcting, or expanding earlier work done in the field, and advancing the relevant body of knowledge in its own right—does not begin until Christopher Leise's splendidly insightful 2009 article "'That Little Incandescence': Reading the Fragmentary and John Calvin in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*." Leise effectively begins the scholarly dialogue on the novel by acknowledging both Shy (2007) and Tanner (2007)—until this point no scholar had referred to another's work—while simultaneously capitalizing on the avenues they explored with more thorough interpretation and historical contextualization (see the entry on his article in Appendix III). Leise usefully contextualizes *Gilead* in the tradition of Puritan spiritual autobiography in America, and finds that the

novel is revising its own Calvinist heritage in several significant ways. Thus, it took five years, counting from 2005's *Gifts of Gilead*, to generate an academic dialogue on the novel—half of the entire first decade of *Gilead* scholarship. The second half, however, is an entirely different story. The history of *Gilead*'s scholarly reception divides after 2009, when the annual rate of publication more than triples from 1.6 items per year in 2005-2009 to 5.17 in 2010-2015 (see Appendix I).

Scholars on both sides of this divide recognized the pivotal and (to mix my metaphors inopportunately) trail-blazing place in *Gilead* reception in which they found themselves. In 2009, Leise was well aware of “the relatively small amount of scholarly attention that *Gilead* has garnered to date (as compared to *Housekeeping*, Robinson's first novel)” (349), and speculated on the causes of this difference as follows: “That Robinson is more deeply engaged with the literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth century in *Gilead*, and that her protagonist is male, may account for the relative quiet in criticism in the now five years since its publication. Most of the scholarship available on *Housekeeping* reads Robinson in the context of nineteenth-century American literature and/or gender issues” (364n1). In 2010, R. Scott LaMascus guest-edited *Christianity and Literature* 59.2, which is dedicated to *Gilead* and *Home* (2008). From his perspective, the dearth of scholarly publications on these novels since their publication was an opportunity (and a challenge): “The writers contributing to this issue conduct their analyses without the benefit or burden of a long history of scholarship on these novels. Indeed, only a few scholarly articles have yet appeared which focus on *Gilead* or *Home*. Hence we are continuing a burgeoning dialogue that will doubtless occupy readers, students, and scholars for years as we come to understand the theological, sociological and historical richness in all Robinson's work” (198-9). LaMascus's prediction has proved accurate insofar as the post-2009 trend of published collections of articles on *Gilead* has continued: namely, in 2014 with *Renascence*'s 66.2 issue and, most recently, *This Life, This World: New Essays on Marilynne Robinson's Housekeeping, Gilead, and Home* in

September 2015. Whether this increasing rate of scholarly attention on Robinson's novels will continue in the future, however, remains to be seen.

Nevertheless, *Gilead* scholarship (and Robinson scholarship more generally) is still in its infancy; it would seem that hardly any of the work done in the field, if recognition in *American Literary Scholarship* is a fair gauge of a piece's reach and visibility, is known to a wider academic audience. From ALS 2004 to 2013 (the current issue as of 2015), i.e. from *Gilead*'s publication to the present, four out of the six total references to Robinson in any of its sections—usually, but not exclusively, “Fiction: The 1960s to the Present”—are on *Housekeeping* (1980), leaving only two that highlight work done on *Gilead*. Jerome Klinkowitz (ALS 2010, 348) recognizes Amy Hungerford's book *Postmodern Belief: American Literature and Religion since 1960* (2010), which includes a short section on *Gilead*; and Catherine Calloway (ALS 2009, 320), while surveying work on Flannery O'Connor, recognizes Susan Petit's article (2010) comparing and contrasting characters in “A Good Man is Hard to Find” with those in *Gilead* and *Home*, specifically the grandmother and the Misfit with John Ames (the narrator) and Jack Boughton, respectively. Petit, we may note here, is easily the most prominent name in *Gilead* scholarship to date, with four published articles on the novel. As of 2015, the only other scholar to publish multiple pieces on *Gilead*—if we allow his works to be separate—is Robert Kohn, who turned his article “Secrecy and Radiance in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead* and *Home*” into a short book with a similar title and main idea (*Radiance and Secrecy in Marilynne Robinson's Gilead*).

Along with the significant increase in publications on *Gilead* from 2010–2015 comes, as one would expect, a proliferation of different approaches to the novel, some of which occur repeatedly enough to constitute their own thematic category. It is time, then, to consider *Gilead* scholarship by theme or subject, now that the overall chronological narrative of its history has been made clear. I have arranged these themes from the most prominent (i.e., those with the most amount of articles in that class) to the least prominent (i.e., those with the least amount of articles in that class, down to three or even two).

By far the most numerous thematic grouping of works on *Gilead* is the theological reading. By my count—and results may vary, depending on what one classifies as “theological”—there are at least eleven pieces that belong here: those of Amy Lignitz Harken and Lee Hull Moses (2005), Betty Mensch (2006), Todd Shy (2007), Christopher Leise (2009), June Hadden Hobbs (2010), Rebecca Painter (2010), Amy Hungerford (2010), Andrew Brower Latz (2011), Haein Park (2014), Andrew C. Stout (2014), and Mark S.M. Scott (2015). Harken and Moses (2005), who begin this tradition, devote Chapter 3 of their book to prayer in *Gilead*, with particular focus on the prayers of John Ames III. They consider examples of three out of the four conventional forms of prayer (adoration, thanksgiving, and supplication—leaving aside contrition, or asking God for forgiveness), as well as “confession,” by which they mean a prayer of doubt or regret. Mensch (2006) looks instead for resonances between *Gilead* and a particular theologian, namely Jonathan Edwards. According to her, Robinson’s “account of the Ames family history reenacts, to a remarkable degree, the cultural history of Edwardsean theology (i.e., of Calvinism in America)” (222). Curiously, however, the one direct reference to Edwards in *Gilead*—the naming history of Edward, Ames’s atheist brother—is taken as a sign of “the withdrawal from Edwards” in conjunction with Ames’s father’s pacifism and his differences with his own father, the abolitionist preacher (227). Shy (2007) reads what he characterizes as *Gilead*’s revisionist Calvinism back into *The Death of Adam* (251), but questions whether it is truly Calvinism (253, 254, 256). Leise (2009) does not seem to be aware of Mensch’s work connecting *Gilead* with Jonathan Edwards (his comments on Shy and Calvinism, on the other hand, I postpone for the moment). Nevertheless, he makes better use of Edwards when he argues convincingly that Robinson is revising and rehabilitating stereotypical present-day notions of Calvinism by reading *Gilead* against a background of Puritan spiritual autobiography, citing Anne Bradstreet, Thomas Shepard, and Jonathan Edwards as typical examples. Hobbs (2010) moves to more abstract theological concepts by studying the use of typology in the novel. She argues that Ames, faced with the prospect of imminent death, involves himself in a process of memorialization, in

which he inscribes his current experience with religious and secular symbols, seeing the patterns of old rituals and stories in his current life (i.e., by using typology). For instance, the burial, entombment, and resurrection of Christ is the pattern behind the significance of the many images of water and baptism that Ames records (245), as well as the many instances of actual burial in the novel (246-7). Moreover, if, as Hobbs speculates, the child to whom the novel is addressed is John Ames IV, the three prior John Ameses become the type of John Ames IV, the antitype; his future life is inscribed with the meaning of his forefathers' stories (247). Baseball is even considered in its relation to heaven as an instance of "secular typology" (255). Painter (2010) also considers the importance of Biblical narratives to the novel. She sees the episode of Ames's sermon on Ishmael and Hagar as "one of Robinson's compelling variations on the Prodigal Son parable: instead of God as the symbolic father who receives his wayward son, she presents two earthly fathers [Rev. Ames and Rev. Boughton] devoted to serving God but failing to show mercy when it is due" (326). Hungerford (2010), in a section of her book *Postmodern Belief*, analyzes the range of religious attitudes (including modes of unbelief) in the novel's characters, as well as the intersection between religious and domestic life. Latz (2011) unites such character study with the more abstract, doctrinal type of analysis when he "examines the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* in *Gilead* as a major theme of the novel," finding that it impacts Ames's daily living (293). For instance, "Ames' experience of the goodness of creation as God's continuous activity is so profound it leads him to an enormous trust in the providence of God" (286). Park (2014), on the other hand, adds to the tradition of connecting *Gilead* with the thought of a particular theologian, noting similarities between the way in which Ames and Dietrich Bonhoeffer view the world: "Pastor Ames affirms the exquisite beauty of this world but like Bonhoeffer, he simultaneously preserves the autonomy of God who transcends this earthly beauty. Bonhoeffer's influence on Robinson is reflected in Ames's vision of this-worldly transcendence" (106). Stout (2014) returns to the creation theology that Latz had treated in 2011, but combines it with a consideration of Calvin's sacramental theology to argue that "Marilynne Robinson, drawing on the

creational and sacramental theology of John Calvin, has successfully developed a distinctly American Protestant sacramental vision in and through her novels *Housekeeping* and *Gilead*. ...Robinson sees creation itself as bearing a sacramental character that is particularly evident in the elements of water, bread, and wine” (571). Finally, and most recently, Scott (2015) analyzes the Calvinistic soteriology of the novel.

The range of such theological readings, as is evident, is quite broad: broad enough, in fact, to include two prominent sub-categories. There are four pieces that consider the relevance of Jonathan Edwards to *Gilead*: those of Mensch (2006) and Leise (2009), as has already been mentioned, as well as those of Park (2014) and Justin Evans (2014), the latter of which is not otherwise concerned with the theology of *Gilead* as such. Their readings are mostly compatible, except that while Leise sees Edwards’s work as typical of Puritan spiritual autobiography (351), Evans sees his *Personal Narrative* as atypical (132); nevertheless, both argue that *Gilead* resembles Edwards’s procedure and ideas in important respects.

An even more numerous sub-field (and justifiably so, since it cuts to the heart of the novel), has to do with Robinson’s revisionist defense of Calvinism in the novel. No less than seven scholars contribute to this issue: Shy (2007), Leise (2009), Latz (2011), D.W. Schmidt (2014), Stout (2014), Scott (2015), and Rachel Griffis (2015). Shy (2007) begins the debate by recognizing that the Calvinism in Robinson’s essay collection *The Death of Adam* runs counter to current stereotypical notions of Calvin’s thought, a trend that *Gilead* continues: “the portrait of orthodoxy sometimes asserted in the essays [in *The Death of Adam*] as Calvinism is nuanced and textured with more humanist ideals. *Gilead* makes this clear, as the novel reads and clarifies the essays rather than the other way around” (251). However, Shy doubts whether what Robinson explicates as Calvinism is in fact Calvinism (253, 254, 256); he even suggests that, “If Robinson’s vision is an outgrowth of the sixteenth century, she may be more continuous with another Frenchman, Montaigne” (257). Leise (2009) responds that “this is

where Shy misses the point: I intend to show that Robinson is consciously reading the Puritan tradition against itself” to reinterpret and rehabilitate it (350), and his argument is convincing. Time and again, Robinson “injects the much older form [of Puritan spiritual autobiography] with a new purpose” (352), for instance with respect to moments of self-deprecation (354), appreciating worldly beauty (356), the jeremiad-sermon (358), and the theological interpretation of physical events (359). After Leise, who is usually not given credit for this idea, it becomes a critical commonplace that *Gilead* is at some level, and perhaps at its very core, an apology for Calvinism. Latz (2011), who does not reference Leise, maintains that some aspects of the novel work “against the abuses and caricatures of the Calvinist conception of total depravity. Robinson shows that Calvinist hamartiology [sic; he means hamartiology] need not be insensitive or judgemental” (289). Schmidt (2014), who also does not credit Leise, is not primarily focused on theological matters: he rather spends his time applying the reader-response concept of the “inscribed reader” to the novel. Nevertheless, he takes the *Gilead*-as-Calvinist-apology view for granted by setting himself the initial question: “What accounts for the secular success of a novel that sets out to redeem Calvinist theology and teachings, the protestant pastorate in America, and American fathers?” Stout (2014) devotes a section to sketching Calvin’s sacramental theology, which (as both he and Robinson note) “is hard to reconcile with the characterizations of Calvin as obsessed with the depraved and fallen character of the world” (575). Scott (2014) at least references Leise with respect to *Gilead*’s Calvinism in the course of his own examination of its Calvinist soteriology (149n2), and Griffis (2015) contrasts the way in which Robinson uses the Prodigal Son narrative with the way in which Catharine Maria Sedgwick and Harriet Beecher Stowe use it to, as Jason Stevens puts it, “overturn Calvinism” (261).

Beyond the range of theological readings and its sub-categories, other (admittedly less well-populated) groups of works exist, on a healthy variety of subjects. The most prominent of these to date is the collection of four scholars that focus on the moments of Ames’s intensified perception of the physical

world: namely Laura Tanner (2007), Leise (2009), Park (2014), and Stout (2014). Tanner (2007) brings the unexpected perspective of neuroscience and clinical geriatrics to bear on Ames's experiences, describing the compensatory effect that the senses have when a person, especially an elderly one, is aware of impending death. "The cultural force of Robinson's text," Tanner argues, "stems not only from its lyrical rendering of quotidian experience but from its powerful unveiling of how dying shapes the sensory and psychological dynamics of human perception" (228). Leise (2009), who was aware of Tanner's work, sees an additional theological significance in Ames's "moments of intense perception" (350). They are, in his view, "a vehicle to an experience of the divine in the immediate and the immanent" (349). Ames's positive, attentive, and theologically-based attitude to the physical world stands out, in Leise's argument, in contrast to the typical Puritan discomfort with taking such intense pleasure in the world; Puritans, it would seem, preferred to focus more exclusively on God in his transcendence, creating a kind of "transcendent idealism" that Ames rejects (350). Park (2014), who was in turn aware of both Tanner and Leise, likewise adds her own refinement to the issue. Tanner had focused on how Ames intensely perceives this world from a bio-chemical, neurological perspective, without reference to God; Leise had emphasized how Ames is able to see God as immanent in nature, while avoiding a Puritan focus on God's transcendence that would impinge upon or restrict his enjoyment of the world; Park argues that Ames is able (somewhat paradoxically) to maintain a proper view of God's transcendence precisely in conjunction with his close attention to the physical world. In other words, Tanner focused on this world, but not God; Leise focused on God's immanence in this world, but not his transcendence; and Park now focuses on both God's immanence in this world and his transcendence. She sees Dietrich Bonhoeffer as a precedent for this compelling, albeit paradoxical attitude. "Pastor Ames," she argues, "affirms the exquisite beauty of this world but like Bonhoeffer, he simultaneously preserves the autonomy of God who transcends this earthly beauty. Bonhoeffer's influence on Robinson is reflected in Ames's vision of this-worldly transcendence" (106). The phrase "this-worldly transcendence" nicely captures the

paradox of the current and (it would seem) accepted position. Stout (2014) maintains a substantially similar view when he claims that “Robinson’s characters (Ruth and John Ames specifically) are able to discern the sacramental presence of God in his creation through their scripturally informed meditations on the world” (577). Ames sees a divine, transcendent presence in the world through paying close attention to the world itself, for “His vision is of a world that can only be seen properly through eyes that recognize the miracle inherent in the ordinary” (581).

Other subjects that have received more modest attention (viz., three articles or essays) range from the to-be-expected presence of race studies, including the work of Lisa M. Siefker Bailey (2010), Christopher Douglas (2011), and Yumi Pak (2015), to the perhaps less expected collection of “medicine and literature” articles, including the work of Tanner (2007), Petit (2013), and Janella Moy (2015). Again, one would expect the three pieces that consider Robinson’s use of the Prodigal Son narrative (Painter [2010], Schmidt [2014], and Griffis [2015]), but perhaps not the variety of other fiction authors chosen for compare/contrast essays or influence studies. Petit (2010) systematically studies *Gilead* in comparison with Flannery O’Connor’s short story “A Good Man is Hard to Find;” Schiff (2015) compares Robinson with John Updike; and Safoura Tork Ladani and Sanaz Bayat (2015) take advantage of a reference to Georges Bernanos in the text to compare his *Diary of a Country Priest* with *Gilead*. Hungerford (2010) and Michael Vander Weele (2010) also connect Robinson with O’Connor, but only in passing. Finally, there are subjects that have only received sustained treatment by two scholars. Once again, these include a wide range of topics, from baseball (Hobbs [2010], Petit [2012]) to American spiritual autobiography (Leise [2009], Evans [2014]) to recent studies devoted solely to Jack (Jonathan Lear [2012], Petit [2013]) to, even more recently, ecocriticism (George Handley [2015], Chad Wriglesworth [2015]). Of course, topics that have received only one treatment to date expand the range of *Gilead* scholarship even further. Evans’s (2014) analysis of the significance of Feuerbach in the novel

and Bailey's (2010) analysis of the significance of fire, for example, are significant contributions to the field, although they have yet to develop into larger trends.

But that may be, of course, at least partially due to the fact that *Gilead* scholarship itself is still developing. It is, as I have already said, in its infancy, and as such there is room for growth. There are less articles on race than one would expect, given the novel's subject matter; more contextualization within American political, theological, and literary history could be done; and as yet literary theory has hardly made an impact on *Gilead* studies: Schmidt's 2014 essay, which is the only obviously theory-based paper so far, poses as a work of feminism in its title ("In the Name of the Father: Male Voice, Feminist Authorship, and the Reader in *Gilead*"), but is really a reader-response argument about the "inscribed reader" of the novel. Finally, studies that compare *Gilead* not just with *Home* (2008) but also with last year's *Lila* (2014), are surely on the way. Robinson may or may not be done with the story of Gilead, Iowa and the characters who inhabit it; but scholars will certainly continue to study them and their town in the decades to come.

APPENDIX I

STATISTICS AND VISUAL AIDS

Figure 1: Publications on *Gilead* by Year

Year	Number of Publications
2005	1
2006	3
2007	2
2008	1
2009	1
2010 J/B	9
2011	2
2012	2
2013	2
2014 J/B	7
2015 J/B	9

J/B = Year in which a journal or book was published, explaining the increased number of publications. Each individual piece within a journal or book is counted separately, when they have to do with *Gilead*.

Figure 2: Graph of Academic Publications on *Gilead*

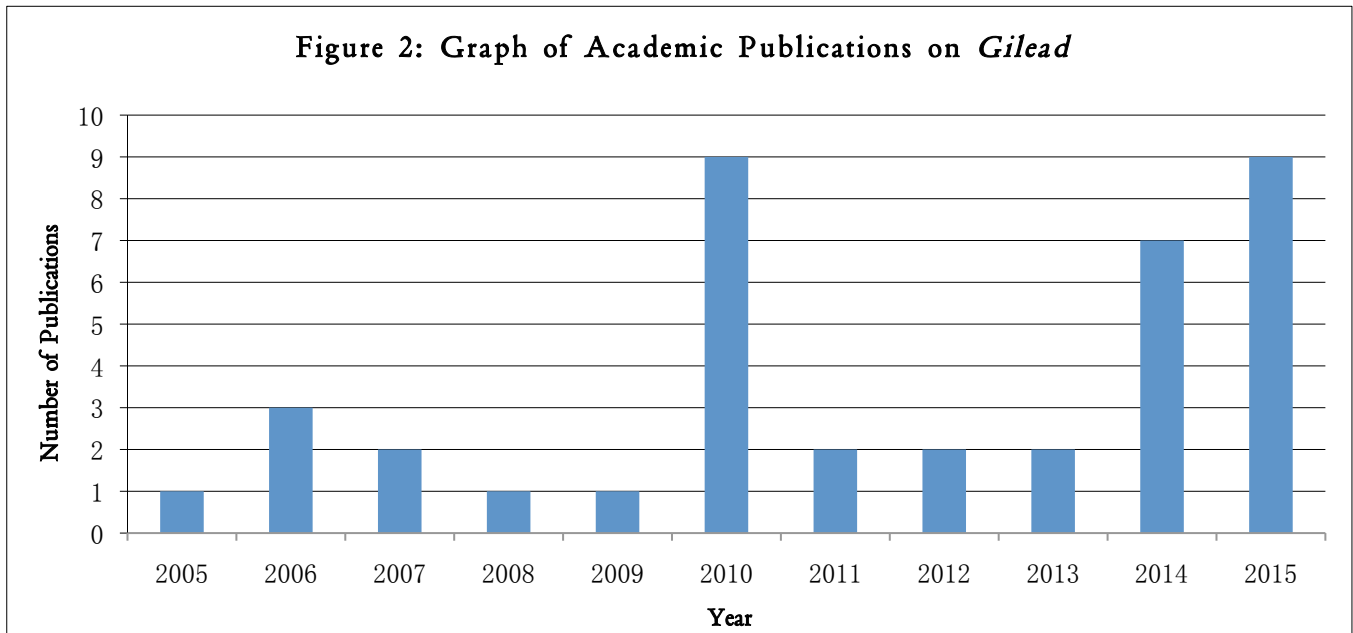


Figure 3: Annual Publication Rate Per Period

Period	Number of Items	Duration (Years)	Rate
2005-2009 (1 st half)	8	5	1.6
2010-2015 (2 nd half)	31	6	5.17
J/B Years	25	3	8.33
Total	39	11	3.55

APPENDIX II

ALPHABETICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allen, Carolyn. "The Privilege of Loneliness, the Kindness of Home: 'Felt Experience' in the Writing of Marilynne Robinson." *This Life, This World: New Essays on Marilynne Robinson's Housekeeping, Gilead, and Home*. Ed. Jason W. Stevens. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015. 190-211. Print.
- Bailey, Lisa M. Siefker. "Fraught with Fire: Race and Theology in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*." *Christianity and Literature* 59.2 (Winter, 2010): 265-80. Print.
- Barber, Leonie. *Gilead by Marilynne Robinson: Notes*. CAE Book Groups, 2007. Print.
- Calloway, Catherine. "Fiction: The 1930s to the 1960s." *American Literary Scholarship* (2009): 311-38. Print.
- Douglas, Christopher. "Christian Multiculturalism and Unlearned History in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 44.3 (Fall, 2011): 333-53. Print.
- "Editor's Note." *Renascence* 66.2 (Spring, 2014): 82-5. Print.
- Evans, Justin. "Subjectivity and the Possibility of Change in the Novels of Marilynne Robinson." *Renascence* 66.2 (Spring, 2014): 131-50. Print.
- Gonzalez, Jeffrey. "Ontologies of Interdependence, the Sacred, and Health Care: Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead* and *Home*." *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 55.4 (August, 2014): 373-88. Print.
- Griffis, Rachel B. "Sentimentality and Grace: Marilynne Robinson and Nineteenth-Century Prodigal Son Narratives." *This Life, This World: New Essays on Marilynne Robinson's Housekeeping, Gilead, and Home*. Ed. Jason W. Stevens. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015. 131-47. Print.
- Handley, George. "Religion, Literature, and the Environment in the Work of Marilynne Robinson." *This Life, This World: New Essays on Marilynne Robinson's Housekeeping, Gilead, and Home*. Ed. Jason W. Stevens. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015. 59-90. Print.
- Harken, Amy Lignitz and Lee Hull Moses. *Gifts of Gilead*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2005. Print.
- Hobbs, June Hadden. "Burial, Baptism, and Baseball: Typology and Memorialization in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*." *Christianity and Literature* (Winter, 2010): 241-62. Print.
- Holberg, Jennifer L. "'The Courage to See It': Toward an Understanding of Glory." *Christianity and Literature* 59.2 (Winter, 2010): 283-300. Print.
- Hungerford, Amy. *Postmodern Belief: American Literature and Religion since 1960*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010. Print.

- Kohn, Robert E. *Radiance and Secrecy in Marilynne Robinson's Gilead*. Charleston: Createspace, 2013. Print.
- . "Secrecy and Radiance in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead* and *Home*." *The Explicator* 72.1 (March, 2014): 6-11. Print.
- Klinkowitz, Jerome. "Fiction: The 1960s to the Present." *American Literary Scholarship* (2010): 347-76. Print.
- Ladani, Safoura Tork and Sanaz Bayat. "Grace in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead* and Georges Bernanos's *The Diary of a Country Priest*." *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences* 56 (July, 2015): 107-15. Print.
- LaMascus, R. Scott. "Toward a Dialogue on Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead* and *Home*." *Christianity and Literature* 59.2 (Winter, 2010): 197-201. Print.
- Latz, Andrew Brower. "Creation in the Fiction of Marilynne Robinson." *Literature & Theology* 25.3 (September, 2011): 283-96. Print.
- Leah, Gordon. "'A Person Can Change': Grace, Forgiveness and Sonship in Marilynne Robinson's Novel *Gilead*." *Evangelical Quarterly* 80.1 (January, 2008): 53-8. Print.
- Lear, Jonathan. "Not at Home in Gilead." *Raritan* 32.1 (Summer, 2012): 34-52. Print.
- Leise, Christopher. "'That Little Incandescence': Reading the Fragmentary and John Calvin in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*." *Studies in the Novel* 41.3 (Fall, 2009): 348-67. Print.
- Mensch, Betty. "Jonathan Edwards, *Gilead*, and the Problem of 'Tradition.'" *Journal of Law and Religion* 21.1 (2005/2006): 221-241. Print.
- Moy, Janella. "Marilynne Robinson's Merging of Medicine and Literature: Therapeutic Journaling as Balm in *Gilead*." *This Life, This World: New Essays on Marilynne Robinson's Housekeeping, Gilead, and Home*. Ed. Jason W. Stevens. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015. 171-89. Print.
- Painter, Rebecca M. "Loyalty Meets Prodigality: The Reality of Grace in Marilynne Robinson's Fiction." *Christianity and Literature* 59.2 (Winter, 2010): 321-40. Print.
- Pak, Yumi. "'Jack Boughton has a wife and a child': Generative Blackness in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead* and *Home*." *This Life, This World: New Essays on Marilynne Robinson's Housekeeping, Gilead, and Home*. Ed. Jason W. Stevens. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015. 212-236. Print.
- Park, Haein. "The Face of the Other: Suffering, *Kenosis*, and a Hermeneutics of Love in Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Letters and Papers From Prison* and Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*." *Renascence* 66.2 (Spring, 2014): 104-18. Print.

- Peters, Lanny. Rev. of *Gilead*, by Marilynne Robinson. *Political Theology* 7.4 (2006): 537-8. Print.
- Petit, Susan. "Field of Deferred Dreams: Baseball and Historical Amnesia in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead* and *Home*." *Multi-Ethnic Literature of the U.S.* 37.4 (Winter, 2012): 119-37. Print.
- . "Finding Flannery O'Connor's 'Good Man' in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead* and *Home*." *Christianity and Literature* 59.2 (Winter, 2010): 301-18. Print.
- . "Living in Different Universes: Autism and Race in Robinson's *Gilead* and *Home*." *Mosaic* 46.2 (June, 2013): 39-54. Print.
- . "Names in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead* and *Home*." *Names* 58.3 (September, 2010): 139-49. Print.
- Pinsker, Sanford. "Review of *The Da Vinci Code*, by Dan Brown and *Gilead*, by Marilynne Robinson." *Prairie Schooner* 80.3 (Fall, 2006): 164-75. Rpt. in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Ed. Jeffrey W. Hunter. Vol. 276. Detroit: Gale, 2009. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 10 Oct. 2015.
- Robinson, Marilynne. *The Death of Adam*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1998. Print.
- . *Gilead*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004. Print.
- . *Home*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008. Print.
- . *Housekeeping*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1980. Print.
- . *Lila*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014. Print.
- Schiff, James. "Robinson and Updike: Houses, Domesticity, and the Numinous Quotidian." *This Life, This World: New Essays on Marilynne Robinson's Housekeeping, Gilead, and Home*. Ed. Jason W. Stevens. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015. 237-53. Print.
- Schmidt, D.W. "In the Name of the Father: Male Voice, Feminist Authorship, and the Reader in *Gilead*." *Renascence* (Spring, 2014): 119-30. Print.
- Schwarzbaum, Lisa. Rev. of *Gilead*, by Marilynne Robinson. *Entertainment Weekly* (November 19, 2004). Web. 5 Dec 2015. <http://www.ew.com/article/2004/11/19/gilead>.
- Scott, Mark S.M. "In the Face of Mystery: Soteriological Symbolism in *Home* and *Gilead*." *This Life, This World: New Essays on Marilynne Robinson's Housekeeping, Gilead, and Home*. Ed. Jason W. Stevens. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015. 148-70. Print.
- Shy, Todd. "Religion and Marilynne Robinson." *Salmagundi* 155/156 (Summer-Fall, 2007): 251-64. Print.

- Stevens, Jason W., ed. *This Life, This World: New Essays on Marilynne Robinson's Housekeeping, Gilead, and Home*. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015. Print.
- Stout, Andrew C. "A Little Willingness to See': Sacramental Vision in Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping* and *Gilead*." *Religion and the Arts* 18 (2014): 571-90. Print.
- A Study Guide for Marilynne Robinson's Gilead*. Farmington Hills: Gale, 2015. Print.
- Tanner, Laura E. "Looking Back from the Grave': Sensory Perception and the Anticipation of Absence in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*." *Contemporary Literature* 48.2 (Summer, 2007): 227-52. Print.
- Vander Weele, Michael. "Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead* and the Difficult Gift of Human Exchange." *Christianity and Literature* 59.2 (Winter, 2010): 217-39. Print.
- Wriglesworth, Chad. "Becoming a Creature of Artful Existence: Theological Perception and Ecological Design in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*." *This Life, This World: New Essays on Marilynne Robinson's Housekeeping, Gilead, and Home*. Ed. Jason W. Stevens. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015. 91-130. Print.

APPENDIX III

CHRONOLOGICAL ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

NOTE: With the (debatable) exception of the first item, this bibliography only includes works within academia (specifically, peer-reviewed journals or books from academic presses) that focus on *Gilead* as the main concern, or at least treat it in a distinct section. Hence the many reviews published in non-academic sources are omitted, as well as merely incidental references in academic books like the entry on Robinson in *The Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century Fiction* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2011) or R. Blakeslee Gilpin's footnote on *Gilead* in *John Brown Still Lives!: America's Long Reckoning with Violence, Equality, and Change* (University of North Carolina Press, 2014). In terms of arrangement, pieces that are dated with a specific month are given precedence over those in the same year, and articles within the same journal issue or book are given in order of appearance; otherwise, the arrangement is alphabetical.

2005

Harken, Amy Lignitz and Lee Hull Moses. *Gifts of Gilead*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2005. Print. This book is aimed at a popular, religious audience, as part of Chalice Press's "Popular Insights" series and is classified as a "Bible Study" on the back cover. It includes questions for discussion at the end of each chapter, as well as reflections and suggestions for daily Christian living. However, *Gifts of Gilead* shares, at least in part, the same goal as academic scholarship and attempts many of the same tasks: "Our hope is that this study guide will help you appreciate *Gilead*, and perhaps read it on a deeper level. We have tried to explain obscure scriptural references, provide basic background for theological issues raised, and refresh your memory about some of the historical events" (3). The six chapters focus on major themes and ideas in the novel, including storytelling (ch.1), scripture and theology (ch.2), prayer (ch.3), remembering (ch.4), the ministerial life, grace, and forgiveness (ch.5), and moments of blessing (ch.6). Readable, simple, and insightful, this book deserves attention from scholars.

2006

Mensch, Betty. "Jonathan Edwards, *Gilead*, and the Problem of 'Tradition.'" *Journal of Law and Religion* 21.1 (2005/2006): 221-241. Print. Mensch reviews *Gilead* in tandem with a recent biography of Jonathan Edwards (*Jonathan Edwards: A Life*, by George Marsden). Instead of reviewing one, then the other, anecdotes and themes from one book are brought into dialogue with the other. As a result, this piece functions more like a typical article than a review. Mensch admits that the connection between Edwards and *Gilead* is somewhat tenuous: "*Gilead* is also about Edwards, although by extreme indirection" (222). Despite this, Robinson's "account of the Ames family history reenacts, to a remarkable degree, the cultural history of Edwardsean theology (i.e., of Calvinism in America)" (222). Mensch sees Edwards's image emerging in Ames's grandfather's era; some historical details overlap, including the abolitionist preacher and Edwards's son 'preaching men into' the war (226). Curiously, the one direct reference to Edwards in *Gilead*—the naming history of Edward, Ames's atheist brother—is taken as a sign of "the withdrawal from Edwards" in conjunction with Ames's father's pacifism and differences with his own father, the abolitionist (227). The rest of the parallels seem circumstantial and unconvincing; they do not illuminate the novel in any significant way. As Mensch herself writes:

“While Ames, however fictional, might fairly be taken as ‘inheritor’ of Edwardsean Calvinism, comparison of Ames to Edwards himself suggests more difference than similarity” (230).

Peters, Lanny. Rev. of *Gilead*, by Marilynne Robinson. *Political Theology* 7.4 (2006): 537-8. Print. In this brief, positive review (“This is as intelligent and sensitive a novel as I have ever read. The prose at times takes my breath away with its beauty, simplicity, and preciseness”), Peters praises Ames as a non-caricatured pastor (Peters is a pastor himself). He notes the intersection of theology and politics (given the journal’s audience) in the person and activities of Ames’s paternal grandfather, the abolitionist preacher.

Pinsker, Sanford. “Review of *The Da Vinci Code*, by Dan Brown and *Gilead*, by Marilynne Robinson.” *Prairie Schooner* 80.3 (Fall, 2006): 164-75. Rpt. in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Ed. Jeffrey W. Hunter. Vol. 276. Detroit: Gale, 2009. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 10 Oct. 2015. Pinsker is very positive on the novel, appreciating the sincerity of Ames and the beauty of the writing, which he places in a grand tradition: “As is the case with our best American literature, *Gilead* rests on the twin pillars of Shakespeare and the Bible, with Faulkner as a mediating influence.” Ames stands out for being a sympathetic minister who has learned from suffering and yet is “embedded in his family history,” and “his best sermons are his nonsermons, the ones he delivers to his inner self.” *Gilead* is “serious literature” in contrast with books like *The Da Vinci Code*.

2007

Tanner, Laura E. “‘Looking Back from the Grave’: Sensory Perception and the Anticipation of Absence in Marilynne Robinson’s *Gilead*.” *Contemporary Literature* 48.2 (Summer, 2007): 227-52. Print. Reviewers, says Tanner, have mostly praised the beauty of Ames’s appreciation of everyday events, but neglected how his anticipation of death informs just such experiences. Hence her thesis is as follows: “The cultural force of Robinson’s text, I will argue, stems not only from its lyrical rendering of quotidian experience but from its powerful unveiling of how dying shapes the sensory and psychological dynamics of human perception” (228). His expectation that he will die soon, in short, intensifies his experience of the time he has left. Tanner expresses this rather simple idea in characteristically over-complicated language as follows: “Even as he attempts to hold death at bay, Ames lends his future absence sensory presence through a process of anticipation that manifests itself in perceptual as well as imaginative terms, gradually allowing Ames the intense experience of a world without him in it” (234). Perspectives from neuroscience, geriatrics, and phenomenology (in the person of Maurice Merleau-Ponty) are brought to bear on *Gilead*, though the amount of digression into these other fields seems disproportionate to the results of their application to the novel.

Shy, Todd. “Religion and Marilynne Robinson.” *Salmagundi* 155/156 (Summer-Fall, 2007): 251-64. Print. This article is divided roughly in half, between Shy’s reflections on Robinson’s essay collection *The Death of Adam* and his reflections on *Gilead*, with remarks on the overlap in content between both books. He begins by contrasting them, but argues ultimately that “the portrait of orthodoxy sometimes asserted in the essays as Calvinism is nuanced and textured with more humanist ideals. *Gilead* makes this clear, as the novel reads and clarifies the essays rather than the other way around” (251). Shy expresses doubt at several points whether what Robinson explicates as Calvinism is in fact Calvinism (253, 254, 256); he even suggests that, “If

Robinson's vision is an outgrowth of the sixteenth century, she may be more continuous with another Frenchman, Montaigne" (257). But Robinson's re-imagined Calvinism is the main link between *The Death of Adam* and *Gilead*: "If the essays in *The Death of Adam* present a more humanistic vision of religion than Calvinism, *Gilead*, published six years later, instantiates the ideal in narrative" (258). Shy goes on to explicate various passages from the novel in the light of this idea, with some success.

2008

Leah, Gordon. "A Person Can Change': Grace, Forgiveness and Sonship in Marilynne Robinson's Novel *Gilead*." *Evangelical Quarterly* 80.1 (January, 2008): 53-8. Print. This brief article functions as an extended plot summary with little to no criticism and no awareness of any other scholarship. Its only new "contribution" is to say that the novel takes place in Ohio (53, 58), not Iowa where it is actually set. It also misspells Marilynne Robinson's first name in the key words on the first page.

2009

Leise, Christopher. "'That Little Incandescence': Reading the Fragmentary and John Calvin in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*." *Studies in the Novel* 41.3 (Fall, 2009): 348-67. Print. This is easily the most important work on *Gilead* to date. Clear, insightful, and informative, it effectively begins the scholarly dialogue on the novel by acknowledging Shy (2007) and Tanner (2007)—till then it had been various voices in the wilderness, monologuing—while simultaneously capitalizing on the avenues they explored with more thorough interpretation and historical contextualization. Like Tanner's piece (which Leise generously describes as a "deft analysis grounded in contemporary cognitive science," [349]), Leise's thesis has to do with the moments of Ames's astonished wonder at the world, with his "moments of intense perception" (350). But more than just intensifying his experience of the present as Tanner had argued, Leise reads these moments as "a vehicle to an experience of the divine in the immediate and the immanent" (349), which stands out in contrast to the typical Puritan attitude of the 17th and 18th century spiritual autobiographies that Leise argues are Robinson's models for *Gilead*: "Ames repudiates this transcendent idealism" (350). Like Shy, Leise is aware that what Robinson depicts in Ames as Calvinism seems to clash with the typical modern idea of Calvinism and the Puritan tradition: but "this is where Shy misses the point: I intend to show that Robinson is consciously reading the Puritan tradition against itself" (350), and his argument is convincing. After outlining the typical characteristics of a Puritan spiritual autobiography (e.g., those of Anne Bradstreet, Thomas Shepard, and Jonathan Edwards), the Puritan revisionism of *Gilead* stands out clearly by contrast (351-2). For instance, "whereas Bradstreet and Shepard direct their children to the world as an exercise in spiritual instruction regarding the transcendent, the Rev. Ames points his son to the earthly as the site of God made manifest. Robinson, then, injects the much older form with a new purpose" (352). This pattern is typical: *Gilead* also reverses the tradition with respect to moments of self-deprecation (354), appreciating worldly beauty (356), the jeremiad-sermon (358), and the theological interpretation of physical events (359). Leise's comments on Jonathan Edwards's relevance are, furthermore, more apropos than those of Mensch (2006), whom Leise does not seem to be aware of anyways. Ultimately, this article is a convincing account of the way in which *Gilead* stems from, but reinvents (or defends) the Puritan/Calvinistic tradition.

Petit, Susan. "Names in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead* and *Home*." *Names* 58.3 (September, 2010): 139-49. Print. Petit examines the names in these two Robinson novels, from the titles of each book to the character names and nicknames, and discovers that "The names in these novels help to bring out the book's themes and point to the characters' situations and relationships, many of the most significant references being to American history and the Bible. These names reinforce the novels' endorsement of a non-doctrinaire, humanistic Christianity and the ideals of racial equality" (139). Petit's analyses range from the suggestive and insightful—for example, that the "John" in *John Ames* recalls John Brown, John Calvin, and John the Evangelist (141) to the tenuous and unconvincing: "After Edward persuaded his father that Iowa was a backwater and Congregationalism narrow-minded, his parents moved to a home on the 'Gulf Coast' (2004: 234). This name evokes the 'great gulf' dividing the saved from the damned in the parable of Lazarus and Dives (Luke 16:26) and symbolizes the spiritual gulf separating the second John Ames from his younger son" (142). Petit raises some interesting points on how Jack parallels both Jacob and Esau. She also reveals her theoretical position that meaning in a text goes beyond the author's intention by acknowledging Robinson's point that the names "Ames" and "Boughton" were, according to her, only meant to be "historically plausible" and no more (141), but still interpreting them.

LaMascus, R. Scott. "Toward a Dialogue on Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead* and *Home*." *Christianity and Literature* 59.2 (Winter, 2010): 197-201. Print. LaMascus introduces this Robinson-focused (and specifically, *Gilead*- and *Home*-focused) issue of *Christianity and Literature*, recognizing that "The writers contributing to this issue conduct their analyses without the benefit or burden of a long history of scholarship on these novels" (198). He does the usual job of introducing the main ideas of each piece; the issue also includes one of Robinson's essays ("Wondrous Love").

Vander Weele, Michael. "Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead* and the Difficult Gift of Human Exchange." *Christianity and Literature* 59.2 (Winter, 2010): 217-39. Print. Vander Weele explores ways in which "human exchange"—or more clearly, communication between people—occurs, offering various thoughts on how characters relate to each other, or how readers relate to the book. The article is rather shapeless, and gives the impression that its paragraphs could be rearranged without apparent aesthetic or argumentative effect; there is no clear logic uniting the various, occasionally insightful comments. These range from the recognition of irony in the text (217), Robinson's difference from Flannery O'Connor and Muriel Spark (217), how the language of *Gilead* "has the inwardness of prayer" (220), how we can think of "the entire book as a kind of counsel" (222), how (alas for the lack of argument here!) "Though the plot quickens in the difficulty of exchange with Jack, it is the difficult, beautiful, humorous—always threatened—exchange between Ames and his young son that drives the novel" (225-6), or how "the associative logic" of the novel joins "the most mundane and most philosophical in a single passage" (227). But for every one of these insights there is an equal and opposite irrelevant comment, e.g.: "The first thing to note about the cats is that there is nothing allegorical about them" (227). Vander Weele is aware of Tanner (2007).

Hobbs, June Hadden. "Burial, Baptism, and Baseball: Typology and Memorialization in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*." *Christianity and Literature* (Winter, 2010): 241-62. Print. Hobbs traces her project back to Tanner (2007), who was also interested in Ames's present-day grappling

with his imminent death. But whereas she answers the question, “How does a person facing death experience life in a meaningful way?”, Hobbs answers the question, “How does a person immersed in savoring his last days face death in its most horrifying form, the possibility of ceasing to exist even in memory?” (242). Her answer is that Ames involves himself in a process of memorialization, in which he inscribes his current experience with religious and secular symbols, seeing the patterns of old rituals and stories in his current life (i.e., by using typology). After an explanation of what typology is (243-6), Hobbs gives examples of this process in *Gilead*. The burial, entombment, and resurrection of Christ is the pattern behind the significance of the many images of water and baptism that Ames records, for instance (245), as well as the many instances of actual burial in the novel (246-7). Hobbs has a particularly valuable insight when she speculates that the unnamed child to whom Ames narrates may be John Ames IV, in which case “Perhaps the point is that he cannot receive the identity of an inherited name unless he knows his antecedents. ...Each descendant can be transformed by knowing that the types before him predict what he may become” (247). Thus the three prior John Ameses become the type of John Ames IV, the antitype; his future life is inscribed with the meaning of his forefathers’ stories. Other examples of this process include the Last Supper and the acts of eating and communion in *Gilead* (249) and even “secular typology” like the ritual of baseball, and its significance for Americans: “At the end of his life, Ames employs baseball as a medium of hope. ...In these two passages, he suggests a parallel between heaven and its earthly American counterpart, a good baseball game” (255).

Bailey, Lisa M. Siefker. “Fraught with Fire: Race and Theology in Marilynne Robinson’s *Gilead*.” *Christianity and Literature* 59.2 (Winter, 2010): 265-80. Print. Bailey makes a useful, and more typically focused (though not completely so) effort at tracing a less obvious theme in *Gilead*, the image of fire—less obvious than, say, the themes of father and son relationships, or prayer and forgiveness, or even baseball. The range of her examples alone is convincing that fire is important in the novel: “fire pops up everywhere in *Gilead*, from the sermons in the attic to his grandfather’s letter that Ames burned, from the Negro church to the fireflies in the yard” (266), among many other instances. The use of fire has a range of significance, including “judgment and grace” (267), “the spiritual progress of the puritanical errand into the wilderness to save those standing too close to the fires of damnation” (271), “a herald of the civil rights movement” (271), and in the case of the Negro church fire, “the false representation of God by humans who made a bad choice” (269). The article veers in to somewhat sermon-like, moralizing territory (and personal anecdotes) that teeter on the edge of non-scholarship, at least by certain standards. Bailey is aware of Mensch (2006).

Holberg, Jennifer L. “‘The Courage to See It’: Toward an Understanding of Glory.” *Christianity and Literature* 59.2 (Winter, 2010): 283-300. Print. Holberg’s article is mostly a character study of Glory Boughton in *Home*, but it does intersect with *Gilead* insofar as she identifies a basic trend in all Robinson’s work: “If one generalization might be made about Marilynne Robinson’s body of work, both fiction and nonfiction (risky and presumptuous as I realize such a gesture to be), it is that her writing urges us again and again to pay attention to what she calls in her first novel, *Housekeeping*, the ‘resurrection of the ordinary’” (283).

Petit, Susan. “Finding Flannery O’Connor’s ‘Good Man’ in Marilynne Robinson’s *Gilead* and *Home*.” *Christianity and Literature* 59.2 (Winter, 2010): 301-18. Print. Petit insightfully compares and contrasts “A Good Man is Hard to Find” with *Gilead* and *Home*, focusing for the most part on

parallels and divergences between Ames and the grandmother, and between Jack and the Misfit. While recognizing that O'Connor's and Robinson's approaches to fiction differ (the former "relies on caricature and satire," but Robinson doesn't; and Robinson has criticized O'Connor's influence on religious fiction and readership [301]), Petit demonstrates that these works can be usefully compared. She notes that Ames and the grandmother control the narrative in the first half of each story, "so that readers distrust the Misfit and Jack before they appear;" moreover, the discussions of whether each of them is "a good man" or not, which appear in both novels, is striking (302). Ultimately, however, the differences between these pairs of characters is clarified despite their many similarities.

Painter, Rebecca M. "Loyalty Meets Prodigality: The Reality of Grace in Marilynne Robinson's Fiction." *Christianity and Literature* 59.2 (Winter, 2010): 321-40. Print. Painter focuses on Robinson's "creation of modern versions of Ruth and the Prodigal Son," with the latter of these themes bringing in *Gilead*. Of particular interest is her analysis of the episode of Ames's sermon on Ishmael and Hagar: this event "exposes one of Robinson's compelling variations on the Prodigal Son parable: instead of God as the symbolic father who receives his wayward son, she presents two earthly fathers [Rev. Ames and Rev. Boughton] devoted to serving God but failing to show mercy when it is due" (326). On the other hand, when Ames warms to Jack by the end of the novel, it is he himself who "merits the term prodigal, as he appreciates his godson's true nature—a form of loyalty—and exhibits the grace of selfless generosity" (330). Painter also offers some new insight into *Gilead* in other respects than her main subject. She places the novel "in the lineage of St. Paul's letters," though without elaborating on the Pauline connection (325); she reminds us that the prejudice of believers against unbelievers is the real reason behind Della's family's rejection of Jack, not racial prejudice (329); and she usefully locates a major turning point (perhaps *the* major turning point) in the novel as follows: "Ames' reconsideration of this event [his baptism of Jack] may constitute the revelatory peripeteia for *Gilead*, and perhaps for *Home* as well" (329).

Hungerford, Amy. *Postmodern Belief: American Literature and Religion since 1960*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010. Print. In ch.5 ("The Literary Practice of Belief") in a 9-page section entitled "Marilynne Robinson and the Theology of Difference," Hungerford considers Robinson's first three novels. The various approaches to religious belief are considered, as well as how these approaches are situated in relationships of friendship and family: "Religious discourse and religious life converge through a formal and thematic feature prominent in Robinson's second and third novels: what I will call the discourse of relationship" (114). Among the attitudes examined are those of Ames, who tolerates and even understands the possibility of unbelief but whose convictions transcend argument and validate religious experience; the reasoned unbelief of Feuerbach and Ames's brother Edward; and, to a lesser extent, the experiential unbelief of Jack. The relationship of religious belief and experience is also examined; and, as a result, Hungerford places Robinson's fiction in "the revival of the philosophical novel initiated by Saul Bellow in the 1950s" (116). All these meditations are situated in "that social context in which the religious life is most compellingly led in her novels: in the family, and through long-term friendship" (117). Hungerford also sees Marilynne Robinson, along with Flannery O'Connor, as "committed New Critical descendents" (viii; cf. 16).

Latz, Andrew Brower. "Creation in the Fiction of Marilynne Robinson." *Literature & Theology* 25.3 (September, 2011): 283-96. Print. Latz takes a theological reading of *Gilead*: "This article examines the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* in *Gilead* as a major theme of the novel" (293). Analyzing the doctrine into six related points (294), Latz traces them in the novel to illustrate how "Robinson's achievement in *Gilead* is to show what the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* looks like in practice," in the sense of 'how would someone who believe in this doctrine relate it to their everyday life?' (284). For instance, "Ames' experience of the goodness of creation as God's continuous activity is so profound it leads him to an enormous trust in the providence of God" (286). Summarizing his results, Latz writes: "In short, creation *ex nihilo* emerges in *Gilead* as a way of experiencing the world; a practice of attention towards the material; an addition of significance to each moment, person and thing by charging the immanent with the transcendent; a sense of the continuous possibility of God's presence and action within creation; a sense of creation coming from and returning to God. Creation exists to be enjoyed, to draw people into love of itself, other people and God" (289). Latz also, like Shy (2007) and Leise (2009), regards *Gilead* as in some respects an apology for, or at least a revision of, stereotypical notions of Calvinism.

Douglas, Christopher. "Christian Multiculturalism and Unlearned History in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 44.3 (Fall, 2011): 333-53. Print. Douglas is the first scholar to approach the novel from the "race, class, and gender" angle, or more specifically from a racial (and political) perspective. Douglas spends much effort in pointing out that Christianity was used to both justify and repudiate slavery, though differently (335-7). This is his bone to pick with *Gilead*. Hence the question that Douglas comes back to again and again: "There is not a glimpse of this historical Christian support of slavery in Robinson's *Gilead*. Why is Christian slavery missing?" (337, reiterated on 338 and 339, and later hardened to "*Gilead's* evasion of history—its will to not learn historical lessons" on 341, or "the proslavery Christian conservatism whose historical presence the novel erases" on 345). In exploring answers to such a question, Douglas compares *Gilead* in particular with Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. In connection with Morrison, he writes: "Morrison's novel's project is one of remembering slavery. And in this respect *Gilead* is a kind of companion volume to *Beloved*, in the sense that it is committed to forgetting about Christian slavery" (343). His second main approach to *Gilead* is to interpret it as Robinson's reaction to the current religio-cultural dominance of "politically conservative evangelical and fundamentalist Christianity" (340). In this reading of the novel, the Robinson's "political opposition to it takes the form of imagining a more idyllic time before that empowerment—in 1956, just as it was on the horizon—and harkening back to a nineteenth-century moment of imagined moral clarity" (340). He often refers to Robinson as a "liberal Christian" who opposes conservative Christianity, however those terms are to be interpreted. Douglas's third approach has to do with race once again, and its connection to Christian practices. He analyzes "*Gilead's* critical account of whiteness," comparing it to books like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (344). Fourth and finally (I should note that these numberings are not Douglas's), he describes the theological doctrine, or rather lack of it, in *Gilead*. According to him, and in sharp contrast to Latz (2011), "Robinson's *Gilead* is reluctant to take up questions of doctrines and beliefs. ...the reader—like John Ames's son—is gently dissuaded from thinking too closely about Christian ideas or theology" (345). He is aware of Hungerford (2010), who also discussed *Gilead* in its wider religio-cultural significance, though she had focused on postmodern patterns of religious belief or unbelief.

Lear, Jonathan. "Not at Home in Gilead." *Raritan* 32.1 (Summer, 2012): 34-52. Print. This article is primarily a character study of Jack across *Home* and *Gilead*, reassessing his behavior and place in (or out of) society. To do this, Lear draws inspiration from 19th-20th century writers and thinkers, in particular Dostoyevsky, Kierkegaard, Freud, and Nietzsche, with particular emphasis on the idea of illusion in Freud and Kierkegaard. What results is that Jack reveals a certain flimsiness or hypocrisy in the world of supposedly Christian values he inhabits: "Jack is, I think, a Christian hero in that by his very way of being he pounds on the illusion of Christendom" (47). In some respects this article reads like an undergraduate paper: it totally lacks any awareness or reference to other scholarship in the field; it strays into personal anecdote multiple times; and it fails to reference any page numbers in either primary book considered (*Home* or *Gilead*), or, for that matter, any of the concepts of Freud, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche invoked so often.

Petit, Susan. "Field of Deferred Dreams: Baseball and Historical Amnesia in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead* and *Home*." *Multi-Ethnic Literature of the U.S.* 37.4 (Winter, 2012): 119-37. Print. Though Hobbs (2010) had analyzed baseball before (in an article that Petit occasionally quotes or refines), this is the first article to systematically analyze its significance in Robinson's novels. Petit does background work of two sorts in the midst of analyzing individual instances of baseball in these novels, viz. recounting the tropes of the baseball novel and (secondly) explaining the historical significance of the game, especially as it intersects with American racism. Baseball is thus a symbol of both exclusion and inclusion (119, 134). Petit considers both implicit baseball references (e.g., *Gilead* is set during "the regular Major League season" [122]), and explicit ones. She points out that, despite baseball's connection with the father/son dynamic in the novel, it does not pretend to heal relationships; more often, playing baseball or talking about it either masks a problem, or only temporarily comforts the participants: "Major League games also provide conversational fodder and unthreatening entertainment, creating a veneer of harmony. ...[Jack] and his father can discuss baseball without fear of hurting each other. ...Baseball also fails to reconcile Ames's father and grandfather, who disagree fiercely about Reconstruction" (128-9). When Petit runs out of actual baseball examples in the novel, she turns to a much less convincing interpretation of the book using baseball metaphors. For instance, "Winning a game or series, a typical plot element in baseball novels, takes the form in *Gilead* of Ames's victory over his prejudice against Jack" (131); or again, "now Ames himself, like a successful base runner, is reaching home" when he approaches death (132). This article also comes into unintentional dialogue with Douglas (2009). Maintaining the very opposite of his view, Petit asserts that *Gilead* does not erase or ignore ignoble history: "*Gilead* and *Home*, however, remind us of what was bad in those good old days, unlike the sort of baseball fiction that does not want to face the actual past" (125). Or again: "In contrast to an amnesiac and pastoral view in which Iowa is an Edenic white world, *Gilead* and *Home* insist on remembering the actual past to show that Iowa was once the 'shining star of radicalism' (*Home* 210) but that it later reflected the country's increasing race prejudice" (127).

Petit, Susan. "Living in Different Universes: Autism and Race in Robinson's *Gilead* and *Home*." *Mosaic* 46.2 (June, 2013): 39-54. Print. In Petit's fourth article on *Gilead*, she tries to identify

why Jack Boughton's behavior is so odd and alienating by appealing to disability studies. "Careful reading," she argues, "shows that Jack is mildly autistic and that his autism spectrum disorder, or ASD, helps explain his youthful misdeeds and many of his present traits" (39). She argues that Jack exhibits many traits typical of ASD, including but not limited to: "being uncomfortable around other people" (41); "Jack dislikes being touched" (41); "Children with ASD tend to disobey rules" (41); Jack is honest to a fault, unintentionally causing emotional wounds (42); "some of Jack's mannerisms and judgments are unusual" (43); he is "emotionally immature" (44). Petit does not address how reducing Jack's black sheep nature and ambiguously moral character to a combination of bad parenting and a medical condition (47) reduces the theological "mystery" of his character in the novel. Like Lear (2012), this article focuses entirely on Jack; like Tanner (2007), it brings in neuroscience to understand a character in *Gilead*.

Kohn, Robert E. *Radiance and Secrecy in Marilynne Robinson's Gilead*. Charleston: Createspace, 2013. Print. This little 78-page independently published book makes the case, among other things, that Lila was in fact the woman that Jack impregnated and abandoned, who originally went by Annie Wheeler. Not being published by an academic press, and having been written by an author who turned to literary studies after his retirement (from a career in economics), it is extraordinarily difficult to obtain from any university library or database.

2014

Kohn, Robert E. "Secrecy and Radiance in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead* and *Home*." *The Explicator* 72.1 (March, 2014): 6-11. Print. In this short essay, Kohn makes an (underdeveloped, but provocative) case that Ames's wife, "Lila, as she now calls herself, had been the fifteen-year-old Annie who gave birth to Jack Boughton's baby more than twenty-two years earlier" (7). In connection with this (admittedly well-kept—suspiciously well-kept, one might think) secret, he argues that "Robinson's emphasis on secrecy suggests that her novel was influenced by Frank Kermode's *The Genesis of Secrecy*" (8). This essay was begun earlier than the short book into which it developed, though the book came out in 2013.

Gonzalez, Jeffrey. "Ontologies of Interdependence, the Sacred, and Health Care: Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead* and *Home*." *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 55.4 (August, 2014): 373-88. Print. Gonzalez takes a politico-economic view of *Gilead*, seeing it as an ethical answer to what he calls "neoliberalism" and its reductive view of human behavior as driven by market forces. This seems to be what he means when he says: "I will argue that this move [in Robinson's fiction from the "ethereal spirituality" of *Housekeeping* to the "firm-but-flexible Protestantism of *Gilead* and *Home*"] interacts suggestively with the ethical turn in literary theory as well as the left-leaning intellectual sphere's craving for a more potent response to the ideological dominance of neoliberalism and its apparatuses" (373). For example, *Gilead* and *Home* "push readers to think outside a mathematical logic of deserving and the causal model of human love. In so doing, they work against the logic of neoliberalism and its market-oriented human." Or again: "We see, then, why Robinson spends so much textual space establishing the human as mysterious and sacred. We see why generosity and charity become axiomatic. In so doing, she offers a potent example of a way of living that effectively counters the social Darwinism of the neoliberal austerity state that so frustrates Judt, Baxter, and the bulk of U.S. intellectual culture" (383). Or again: "Though perhaps drawn from unfashionable sources, the baseline considerations presented here—responsibility to others, assurances of inherent human value—provide a set of axioms that

rewrite the atomizing ontology of neoliberalism, a philosophical act with necessarily political resonances” (384). Gonzalez is also the first scholar to make use of Levinas in interpreting *Gilead* (375, 381) and to discuss Judith Butler’s ideas in connection with the novel, which ideas also, according to him, counter neoliberalism (376, 379–80). Michel Foucault is also a first in *Gilead* scholarship—though he only appears in connection with the politics of Robinson’s nonfiction, not in connection with *Gilead* itself (379–80).

“Editor’s Note.” *Renascence* 66.2 (Spring, 2014): 82–5. Print. The (unnamed) editor is “thrilled to be presenting this special issue on Marilynne Robinson” (83), and the (also unnamed) Editor Emeritus gives a quick summary of the essays in *The Death of Adam*.

Park, Haein. “The Face of the Other: Suffering, *Kenosis*, and a Hermeneutics of Love in Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s *Letters and Papers From Prison* and Marilynne Robinson’s *Gilead*.” *Renascence* 66.2 (Spring, 2014): 104–18. Print. The cumbersome title of this article could have been more accurately and economically renamed “Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s and John Ames’s ‘This-Worldly Transcendence’ in *Gilead*.” Like other scholars in the past—namely, Tanner (2007) and Leise (2009)—Park is interested in those moments of incandescent beauty that Ames experiences in the novel. According to her, Ames is able to simultaneously do justice both to this world and to the world of the divine. Tanner had focused on how Ames intensely perceives this world, and Leise had recognized how Ames could see God in nature (while not focusing on a Puritan preoccupation with God’s transcendence); Park points out that Ames can appreciate both God’s transcendence and the beauty of nature simultaneously: “Pastor Ames affirms the exquisite beauty of this world but like Bonhoeffer, he simultaneously preserves the autonomy of God who transcends this earthly beauty. Bonhoeffer’s influence on Robinson is reflected in Ames’s vision of this-worldly transcendence” (106). Park not only makes use of Robinson’s essay on Bonhoeffer to interpret *Gilead*, but also the works of Jonathan Edwards—like Mensch (2006) and Leise (2009) before her—as well as, for the first time in *Gilead* scholarship, Jean-Luc Marion, and (for much longer than Gonzalez [2014]), Immanuel Levinas. Park makes some use of Leise (2009) but constantly misspells his name.

Schmidt, D.W. “In the Name of the Father: Male Voice, Feminist Authorship, and the Reader in *Gilead*.” *Renascence* (Spring, 2014): 119–30. Print. In this useful and illuminating essay, Schmidt brings reader-response theory to bear on the question of “What accounts for the secular success of a novel that sets out to redeem Calvinist theology and teachings, the protestant pastorate in America, and American fathers?” (We may note, in passing, how Schmidt recognizes *Gilead* as an apology for, or rehabilitation of, Calvinism, like others before him.) He locates the answer in various aspects of “the voice and narrative of John Ames.” Robinson, according to him, “infuses Ames’s narration with a certain feminine sensitivity distinctive in American literature,” in addition to creating a receptive audience by having already achieved a “feminist reputation” with *Housekeeping* (119). Reader-response theory comes in the form of Roland Barthes’ idea of the “inscribed reader.” Schmidt points out that *Gilead* puts the audience in the form of the inscribed reader, Ames’s son, and thereby wins us over (120). In practice, this process is described as follows: “At the least, the reader is allied with the son. Again, the only person who is supposed to read this text is the grown-up son, and passages like the one quoted earlier about Ames’s appreciation of his son’s life and existence, with its emotional eloquence, make the reader feel like the beloved child of a grateful and gracious father” (125). Or again: “Ames approaches the reader sympathetically in the aspect of a father and as a rapturous observer

of life and the physical world. One might say his generous, gracious, and even feminine voice compels the reader to listen. Then he (or the she behind him) can do whatever he (or the she behind him) wants” (124). This article is noteworthy for other reasons as well. For instance, Schmidt is the first to compare and contrast *Gilead*'s treatment of fathers and sons with Hemingway, in particular his Nick Adams story “Fathers and Sons” (122-3). Or again, he not only recognizes the importance of the Prodigal Son to *Gilead*, but also traces parallels between the novel and the Pauline epistles, particularly the letters to Timothy (127-8), and the Acts of the Apostles (128-9)—thus capitalizing on the insight that Painter (2010) had, but did not develop.

Evans, Justin. “Subjectivity and the Possibility of Change in the Novels of Marilynne Robinson.” *Renascence* 66.2 (Spring, 2014): 131-50. Print. Evans argues that the importance of Feuerbach in *Gilead* has to do with the way he affirms human subjectivity and the way we can effect normative change in the world, a concern he shares with Christianity despite his atheism. This contrasts with the position of the New Atheists, against whom Evans sets Robinson's thought and writings. Thus *Gilead* is, on some level, “a response to New Atheism” (132). New Atheists, or at least the ones Evans quotes, “make explicit the rejection of normativity and subjectivity” that follows upon their recognizing only natural laws, to the exclusion of supernatural norms (135). But because, according to *Gilead*, “we are subjects, because we respond to norms as well as laws, we can hope to change the world, not only to understand it. It is his support for this idea that earned Feuerbach his place in *Gilead*” (136). To prove these points about Feuerbach's relevance, Evans takes us on a crash course through Kant, Hegel, and Feuerbach himself (137-9). According to Evans, Feuerbach thinks humans are capable of creating normative standards beyond natural laws, placing him between the New Atheists, who think such an endeavor impossible (because there are only natural laws), and at least some Christians (who think that only God can create normative standards). But Feuerbach, like Christianity, affirms the human capacity to change our own response to normative standards, and hence behavior, for the better. Evans sees *Gilead* as “a defense of the possibility of change, which relies on norms and values other than the natural. This is the importance of Ames giving Jack a copy of Feuerbach: everyone can change” (143). Evans is also the first to add to Leise's (2009) placing of *Gilead* in the tradition of American spiritual autobiography (132-3). Though he does not place as much emphasis as Leise on this tradition, what he adds is worth considering: for instance, he notes that Jonathan Edwards' *Personal Narrative* was atypical for its day, while *Gilead* matches more closely with typical spiritual autobiographies (132). *Gilead*'s form as a spiritual autobiography is important to Evans's argument insofar as such a form implicitly hopes to effect positive change in the reader, even as it narrates spiritual change in the author (134).

Stout, Andrew C. “‘A Little Willingness to See’: Sacramental Vision in Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping* and *Gilead*.” *Religion and the Arts* 18 (2014): 571-90. Print. According to Stout, “Marilynne Robinson, drawing on the creational and sacramental theology of John Calvin, has successfully developed a distinctly American Protestant sacramental vision in and through her novels *Housekeeping* and *Gilead*. ...Robinson sees creation itself as bearing a sacramental character that is particularly evident in the elements of water, bread, and wine” (571). He devotes a section to sketching Calvin's sacramental theology, which (as both he and Robinson note) “is hard to reconcile with the characterizations of Calvin as obsessed with the depraved and fallen character of the world” (575). Stout thus considers aspects of *Gilead* that have been treated of before, but in a newly combined way: Latz (2011) had analyzed the theology of creation; Leise (2009), Latz (2011), and Schmidt (2014) had seen *Gilead* as a Calvinist apology; and Tanner

(2007) and Leise (2009) had focused on Ames's moments of intensified perception of ordinary things. All these elements combine as Stout argues that "Robinson's characters (Ruth and John Ames specifically) are able to discern the sacramental presence of God in his creation through their scripturally informed meditations on the world" (577). Ames's vision of the world in particular is one of "a world that can only be seen properly through eyes that recognize the miracle inherent in the ordinary" (581).

2015

Ladani, Safoura Tork and Sanaz Bayat. "Grace in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead* and Georges Bernanos's *The Diary of a Country Priest*." *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences* 56 (July, 2015): 107-15. Print. Ladani and Bayat compare and contrast these two novels and conclude that both "explore themes such as forgiveness, love, peace, faith, and grace. ...each novelist presents the saving and life-giving power of God's grace in healing and restoring [the] human soul... The Protestant Robinson's sensibility regarding these religious themes seems very similar to that of the Catholic Bernanos." Ladani and Bayat even go so far as to claim that "the American writer seems to be considerably influenced by her French predecessor" (107). About half of the article is a summary of each book, and half a catalogue of parallels (and divergences). Among the various comparisons are the following: "Like the young priest of Bernanos' novel, Reverend John Ames is an example of someone serious about being human and fully aware of mysteries of God's grace" (111); "Both Ames and the priest feel their imminent death, due to their bad health" (111); "Grace—the thread running through the two novels connecting together not just the different parts of each novel but the two novels together—is the divine forgiveness of sins and God's love and mercy" (113); "the two novelists do not seek holiness, goodness, loveliness, and saintliness beyond the world of humans" (114). Ladani and Bayat are, to date, the only scholars to make anything out of the reference to Bernanos in *Gilead*. Unfortunately, their article is not up to academic standards (or basic English standards) of grammar, spelling, and writing. A sampling of the frequent atrocities and embarrassments in their writing are the following: "Ames wants to saves his wife" (107); "fallowing Christian ethics" (109); "he acted as an angle of grace" (110); "You fell that you are with someone" (111, quoting *Gilead*); "*The Ddiary of a Country Priest*" (112); referring to *Gilead* as being published in 2007 and 2004 on the same page (114); and repeating the Abstract (107) verbatim as the Conclusion (114).

Handley, George. "Religion, Literature, and the Environment in the Work of Marilynne Robinson." *This Life, This World: New Essays on Marilynne Robinson's Housekeeping, Gilead, and Home*. Ed. Jason W. Stevens. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015. 59-90. Print.

Wriglesworth, Chad. "Becoming a Creature of Artful Existence: Theological Perception and Ecological Design in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*." *This Life, This World: New Essays on Marilynne Robinson's Housekeeping, Gilead, and Home*. Ed. Jason W. Stevens. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015. 91-130. Print.

Griffis, Rachel B. "Sentimentality and Grace: Marilynne Robinson and Nineteenth-Century Prodigal Son Narratives." *This Life, This World: New Essays on Marilynne Robinson's Housekeeping, Gilead, and Home*. Ed. Jason W. Stevens. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015. 131-47. Print. Jacob Stevens summarizes this piece as follows, in a conversation with Robinson: "Rachel Griffis, in

this volume, demonstrates that [Catharine Maria] Sedgwick and [Harriet Beecher] Stowe use the Parable of the Prodigal Son—which you brilliantly mine for its biblical and theological valences in *Gilead* and *Home*—to overturn Calvinism. Through stories about parents (or step-parents), and children, Stowe and Sedgwick attack Calvinism for degrading human agency, depriving people of hope, costing them loss of faith, promoting elitism, and fostering human vanity and self-righteousness” (261). *Gilead*, however, does not follow this tradition in every respect, but instead defends Calvinism through its use of the Prodigal Son narrative.

Scott, Mark S.M. “In the Face of Mystery: Soteriological Symbolism in *Home* and *Gilead*.” *This Life, This World: New Essays on Marilynne Robinson’s Housekeeping, Gilead, and Home*. Ed. Jason W. Stevens. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015. 148-70. Print.

Moy, Janella. “Marilynne Robinson’s Merging of Medicine and Literature: Therapeutic Journaling as Balm in *Gilead*.” *This Life, This World: New Essays on Marilynne Robinson’s Housekeeping, Gilead, and Home*. Ed. Jason W. Stevens. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015. 171-89. Print.

Allen, Carolyn. “The Privilege of Loneliness, the Kindness of Home: ‘Felt Experience’ in the Writing of Marilynne Robinson.” *This Life, This World: New Essays on Marilynne Robinson’s Housekeeping, Gilead, and Home*. Ed. Jason W. Stevens. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015. 190-211. Print.

Pak, Yumi. “‘Jack Boughton has a wife and a child’: Generative Blackness in Marilynne Robinson’s *Gilead* and *Home*.” *This Life, This World: New Essays on Marilynne Robinson’s Housekeeping, Gilead, and Home*. Ed. Jason W. Stevens. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015. 212-236. Print.

Schiff, James. “Robinson and Updike: Houses, Domesticity, and the Numinous Quotidian.” *This Life, This World: New Essays on Marilynne Robinson’s Housekeeping, Gilead, and Home*. Ed. Jason W. Stevens. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015. 237-53. Print. “In this exploratory essay,” Schiff writes, “I examine Robinson’s and Updike’s shared interests in the domestic and the mundane, in Christian theology and the life of ministers, and in the development of prose styles that combine realism and a sense of transcendence” (237). While he considers *Housekeeping* and *Home* as well, *Gilead* comes into his argument when he contrasts the “two authors’ respective efforts, in *A Month of Sundays* and *Gilead*, to compose a novel limning the personal reflections of a Protestant minister” (237). The strongest point of convergence between these two authors comes, however, in the conjunction between *Home* and Updike’s short story “A Sandstone Farmhouse.”