

Grace Unveiled: the Exploration of Being/being and the Self in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*

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Abstract

Marilynne Robinson is one of the most well-known and influential American Christian novelists. After the publication of *Housekeeping* (1980), her second novel, *Gilead* (2004) also centers on her contemplation of religious experience and its relation to belief. Unlike her first novel, Robinson in *Gilead* goes further to probe into the relation between God and his creation, namely, Being and being via the recollection of John Ames the minister's letter to his son. The relation between Being and being has been an unsolvable philosophical motif. In this paper, I will explore how Robinson elaborates her understanding of this issue in *Gilead* by drawing on John the Apostle's statement-- "the Word was God" (John 1:1) and then see how recollection connects John Ames's lived experience, guiding him to know the sense of his self and to experience God's love and forgiveness.

Keywords: religious expression, religious experience, Word, the self, Being, being