[Name of the Writer]

[Name of Instructor]

[English]

[Date]

The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner

**Introduction**

“The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner” written by James Hogg in 2009. The novel is written in three parts including "the editor's narrative," "private memoirs and confessions of a sinner," and "the end of the memoir." James Hogg’s novel is a meta-fictional in structure as it includes a religious satire and gothic elements. It is notable to mention that the attempt to distinguish and classify the novel into a single genre is just a venture as it presents various themes. This essay recognizes various attributes of the novel which legitimize the identification of a gothic novel, its genres, a religious satire, and being a meta-fiction. It is essential to highlight various political and literary spheres of Scotland during the writing of this masterpiece. Moreover, one must be taken into consideration that the genre of the novel is being focused according to its time, instead of its appearance. The focus of the entire review of this piece of literature is to critically analyze prominent domains of religious satire and gothic presented by James Hogg in this novel.

**Discussion**

First of all, it is necessary to understand the theological parody of Hogg’s ingenious literary craft with the help of Scotland’s situation at that time. It is noteworthy to mention that it was a time period when efforts of justifying corporeality and all things perceptible were at their peak. During those circumstances, there was a complete deterioration of people’s belief. For gaining true knowledge, religious principles were altered and were considered as a source of uncertainty, instead of a singular medium to provide true knowledge. Extremities of its practices when not ready to preserve its divine nature, but they were continually queried as men employ reason to uphold justice. Hogg informed readers about the decision of Arabella Calvert in ‘the Editor’s narrative’ to not show up in the trial of George Colwan’s murder. Arabella Calvert could have saved both Thomas Drummond and the person accused of the heinous act as she was the only witness of fratricide. Her unwillingness to not show up at the trail may seem unnatural due to her friend Ridsley, who is known for “never mistook one man for another in his life, which makes the mystery of the likeness between this incendiary and Drummond the more extraordinary” (Hogg 67). She discloses the similarity of Gil Martin in her recount of the critical occurrence to Mrs. Logan.

She was afraid that she would not be able to talk to the judge in order to accept her words as she could not persuade a fellow eye witness to come with her in the court. The visit of George Colwan’s to Arthur’s Seat is experienced as echoes by Arabella Calvert. Colwan was found guilty which resulted in incarceration due to his defensive aggression with his brother Robert. The Judge perceived that his statement is just like “a very extraordinary story” (Hogg 43). The readers are made aware of the disturbance made through lack of logical explanation. In theology, there is a perception for strange occurrences as evil is linked with demons. It is believed that the light treatment of both George's words and Arabella's words disgrace their integrity. Due to this, the status of Pittock’s position reiterates in the period of Enlightenment where confessions sanctions as a religion satire because various explanations have taken primacy in the verdict of presence.

Hoggs employed such validations through the novel by extended these to the gothic element. The mysterious existence of Gil-Martin and the immeasurable connotations of devils with damnations, not just to Robert, but to readers as well are considered as a work of gothic intent. The novel is the assessment of very cultural operations of Scotland. It is notable to mention that gothic elements are introduced at first during the encounter of Robert Wringham with “a young man of a mysterious appearance” (Hogg 96). Robert was expressing his thankfulness to his life when he was standing in the woods. The company of Gil-Martin caused trouble for the parents of Robert. Robert had gone through a major change after his engagement with Gil, which demonstrates the oblivious state in which Robert was suppressed with his sense of self. Robert disoriented from his beliefs and religion as he professed the prospect about existing as two selves due to his disoriented mind. Mrs. Keeler made vital charges against Robert and Robert was trying to defend him by claiming that he has “a second self; or that there is some other being who appears in [his] likeness” (Hogg 146). Hogg is trying to demonstrate two main possibilities for the presence of Gil-Martin. Between religious fanaticism and devil worship, she might be a metaphorical expression or she might be a projection of Robert's alter ego that was undermined and crushed by his fascination.

It is also essential to mention that the domain of challenges related to classifying Confessions recognized as a gothic novel. This particular consideration would advocate its main aim as the prospect of drawing the Scottish experience. The main idea of Scottish practice recognized as “uncanny, second self.” It is established as a weird involvement because of the political tussle with Britain. It is interesting to explore that the idea of Hogg’s Confessions is closely linked with the perspectives established by Robert Louis Stevenson’s The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. It is a clear explanation of the particular idea of exploring conflicts all the individuals who are accepting and the ones who strictly stick to their traditional beliefs. It is noticeable to identify the prevailing difference between two different approaches. The traditional phenomenon concerning the attributes links with the works of the devil whereas the former concept considers the complications of the human mind due to different forms of pressures exist in the society. All the confusion relevant to the details of Gil’s character highlight all the concerns relevant to the display of imagination set by Robert. The focus of Hogg through this particular idea is to present information about the psychological illness. The issue of psychological concerns closely related to all the repressive aspects of religion. This concept can also explore through the example of the individual who put himself into immense trouble to eradicate all form of evil from the world. The failure of identifying potential inability to perform work linked with the broader application of the principles set by the individual. Inadequate information about all the intentions of Robert is troubling because it displays negative features of the actual theological practices. It is one major source of discrimination which gives the adverse impression to the readers. Adoption of the contrasting environment makes it difficult to reach the true domain of reality.

Theology is presented as a medium that hypothetically consists of extremism when grabbed unmediated and unmonitored. Hogg's integration of two voices in Confessions produces an operational binary within it. This qualifies his report to be one of which is free from prejudices, hence providing readers with a dispassionate view of Robert's encounters. It puts forth the idea that reason salutations scriptural doctrines in a way that it promotes a rational elucidation rather than embracing a superficial approach in discriminating the words of the celestial. Here, Confessions affirm the restraint on religious consecration: the vulnerability to self-righteousness and misleadingly subjecting others who are seemingly less virtuous, to less earnest individuals. Both Wringham and Robert discourse their views in the nonexistence of an unbiased party. After being pursued persistently by Robert, readers might be led to assume that he might grow intolerant and irritated by the situation. His lack of cruel intent towards an individual who has been causing him uneasiness led to his segregation, and it opposes Robert's impression of his brother. However, as the novel develops into the personal statement by Robert Wringham himself, the inconsistencies of the account raise the question of the trustworthiness of the Editor’s Narrative. Instead, the novel takes a diverse trajectory by depicting George’s guiltless disposition as he “cannot for [his] life see for what other purpose it can be” (Hogg 33) that Robert is behind his steps other than longing for a “reconciliation.” Despite the nonappearance of a spiritual context, George is perceived to be more merciful as compared to his brother. It also describes the misrepresentation that correlates one’s faith to one’s principled standing. Self-righteousness is further denounced through George Colwan, who appears to have taken Robert Wringham’s character. The novel, therefore, tries to highlight the unreasonableness of those who have misplaced their reason to the literal transcriptions of the Bible. While the gothic component supports massively to the novel's appearance of religious ridicule, its meta-fictional quality adds weight into its scorning attribute. Readers are first informed about the subject matter of the novel through the perspective of a narrator whose account is not consequent from firsthand experience.

Hogg’s employment of classification that exemplifies an abnormal physical profile strengthens the dark story of his novel, especially in a period where logic is not able to reason out a wraithlike presence. It is this particular feature that Arabella Calvert was certain about her account would be disallowed during the trial due to its vicious nature. This is especially mystifying when Gil confesses to holding the ability to “attain the same likeness” of a man’s features whenever he envisages on their opinions and character. The unexpected nature has been related to the masquerade of “Satan” (Hogg 100) as Rabina, Robert’s mother, pointed out to him that “it is one of the devil’s most profound wiles to appear like one” (Hogg 101); one mentioning to Robert’s description of his new acquaintance to be “an angel of light” (Hogg 100). Spiritual references seem to focus on the Wringham’s domestic, bordering their devotion to reliance with fixation. As their lives are verbalized by the scriptures, the paranormal does not seem to be an irrational subject. This evil is then anticipated onto the image of Gil-Martin as he never fails to invoke in the minds of those who have seen him as a being resembling an ‘apparition’; a term cited limitless times throughout Confessions. Time and again, readers are made to anticipate on the authenticity of the character. Furthermore, Robert’s continuous expostulation about his brother and father being “castaways, reprobates, aliens from the church and the true faith, and cursed in time and eternity” (Hogg 29) echoes fascination to proclaim his self-righteous knowledge about true malevolent. Here, it can be pragmatic that the gothic crux of the novel branches from its religious demeanor. This then sets the scornful tone of Confessions which deems such affairs to be a product of extreme religious practices. Robert was trained to carry out religious obligations, but he was the only person who prays for the elect. Robert has kept under the strict theological stimulus, and as the story progress, it laid the footing for judicious to his peculiar account.

Fatefully, he fails to perceive that committing murder and taking circumstances into his own hands are irreligious in their own rights due to the fact that one person is taking the task of Mighty in his own hand. He suffered from the allegations of his own values due to the inability to recognize the extent of his own activities. Negative light is being shed on the factual theological practices due to the lack of knowledge about Robert’s intentions. A contrasting environment is mentioned by the author in which both brothers were brought up. These contrasting environments demonstrate the favor of education over the other. According to the author, “George was “educated partly at the parish-school, and partly at home” (Hogg 17). Under these circumstances, he tends to be kind-hearted and generous. However, Robert considered his brother an enemy of the church which is difficult to reconcile with. George is brought up with the idea of moderation as he is taught both by religion and reason, to provide logical explanations to the existence. The negative impression of religion is depicted in the novel through a grim description of the childhood background of both George and Robert. The nature of theology is not attacked by confession, but it highlights the constraints of one’s life to religion.

**Conclusion**

In a nutshell, it becomes necessary for readers to assess the equal weight of the personal account along with the narrative in order to conclude the truthfulness and supposition that is closer to the authenticity of the story. A sense of resentment and hatred is delicately provoked in the novel which focused on the experience of George Colwan. The sense of resentment declared Robert guilty for the murder of his brother. George is portrayed as an innocent and decent person who suffered from the furies of religious fanaticism of his brother. The novel predicts the negative consequences of religion on an individual when the religious practices commenced go unmonitored. The non-monitoring of religious practices demonstrate the irritant behavior of Robert.

Works Cited

Hogg, James. *The private memoirs and confessions of a justified sinner*. Broadview Press, 2001.