

Public Abstract

First Name:Zachary

Middle Name:Kerneese

Last Name:Johnson

Adviser's First Name:Noah

Adviser's Last Name:Heringman

Co-Adviser's First Name:

Co-Adviser's Last Name:

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Title:Portrait of the Calvinist as a Young Killer: Confessions, Fanaticism, and Satanic Horror in Hogg's Justified Sinner

James Hogg's *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* innovated several important novel genres in the Romantic literary era. The novel centers around a young man, Robert Wringhim, who, along with his devilish double, Gil-Martin, goes on a religious-based killing spree in late 17th century and early 18th century Scotland. The chronicle of Wringhim's fall from righteousness, told by both an editor and in Robert's own words, is disturbing, ambiguous, and diabolically deceptive.

I will first examine varying Scottish dialects as recorded in the book and how the interplay between them allows Hogg to represent the "many voices" of Scotland, and to challenge the notion that higher education equals virtue and goodness—a study highly influenced by the aforementioned Bakhtinian theories. I will also examine several genres *Justified Sinner* both utilizes and satirizes: including gothic and horror fiction and confessions. Whereas many Romantic novels embraced the genres they found themselves in, Hogg's novel seems resistant to being confined a particular one. He plays with traits of genres to darkly humorous ends, and crafts a tale of suspense and terror that refuses to give readers closure of any tangible kinds. By manipulating what the novel should do with what it can do, Hogg asks uneasy questions about faith, spirituality, fanaticism, sin, guilt, confessing, the supernatural, and Scottish literary culture.