

The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner: with a detail of curious traditionary facts, and other evidence, by the editor

James Hogg

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written by himself

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The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner, (Full title, The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner: Written by Himself: With a detail of curious traditionary facts and other evidence by the editor) is a novel by the Scottish author James Hogg, published anonymously in 1824.

Considered by turns part-gothic novel, part-psychological mystery, part-metafiction, part-satire, part-case study of totalitarian thought, it can also be thought of as an early example of modern crime fiction in which the story is told, for the most part, from the point of view of its criminal anti-hero. The action of the novel is located in a historically definable Scotland with accurately observed settings, and simultaneously implies a pseudo-Christian world of angels, devils, and demonic possession.

The first edition sold very poorly and the novel suffered from a period of critical neglect, especially in the nineteenth century. However, since the latter part of the twentieth century it has won greater critical interest and attention. It was praised by André Gide in an introduction to the 1947 reissue and described by the critic Walter Allen as 'the most convincing representation of the power of evil in our literature'. It has also been seen as a study of religious fanaticism through its deeply critical portrait of the Calvinist concept of predestination. It is written in English, with some sections of Scots that appear in dialogue.



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