

# Romanticism in the devil and tom walker

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"The Devil and Tom Walker" was an Early Romanticism written by Washington Irving. Irving was a reluctant lawyer who preferred writing and is now mostly known for "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow". Irving was the first American to achieve international reputation. In 1815 Irving traveled through Europe, remaining there for 17 years. Although when "The Devil and Tom Walker" was first published in 1824 it was not well received and even caused Irving to stop writing fiction all together, today it is considered an illustrious Early Romantic.

Irving returned to America in 1832 to live with his brother. Irving died at the age of 76 and was buried near the haunting ground of his famous horseman-in New York's Sleepy Hollow Cemetery. Elements of Romanticism pervade all of Irving's writings. His love of scenes of nature, his sense of wonder, and his optimism all show through, even in his early work; these elements became progressively more pronounced as the freedom of expression which that era had fostered took root. Ultimately, Irving's work has come to be viewed as emblematic of the Romantic era.

Romanticism did not always end with a happy ending. In fact, the originals of the romanticism stories were about the evil of human nature. The work of early American writers like Irving show the influence of European Romanticism. ? Washington Irving would use an emphasis on nature, the supernatural, and superstitions in his stories. "The Devil and Tom Walker" pictures nature as mysterious. Tom walked through a swamp that was so thick that when it was noon it would still be very dark. At times, water logs would look like alligators floating in the water.

The supernatural area also played an essential role in the story. The devil, being the supernatural being, seemed to have the ability to trade riches for a person's soul. Tom, having sold his soul, wanted to outsmart the devil by recruiting the help of another supernatural power, God, by carrying a bible. Greed is one of the most important themes of "The Devil and Tom Walker". Tom is approached by Old Scratch and offered wealth beyond his wildest dreams. Initially, Tom is so greedy that he declines because he would have to share the fortune with his wife.

Eventually, however, Tom is duped by the false kindness of Old Scratch and blinded by his own greed. As Irving writes, Tom "was not a man to stick at trifles when money was in view." Once established as a moneylender in Boston, Tom is described ironically as a "universal friend of the needy," even though "In proportion to the distress of the applicant was the hardness of his terms." Though he becomes wealthy, Tom still remains stingy: he refuses to furnish his mansion or feed his horses properly.

Still, he denies his greed. When accused by a customer of taking advantage of his misfortune, Tom answers "The devil take me if I have made a farthing!" Of course, immediately Old Scratch appears at the door. Irving's moral is clear: "Such was the end of Tom Walker and his ill-gotten wealth. Let all griping money-brokers lay this story to heart." In conclusion, "The Devil and Tom Walker", by Washington Irving portrays a man set in New England in the 1720's who allowed greed and selfishness to control him.

Tom Walker, protagonist of the story, pledged both himself and his morals to the devil for the sake of riches and wealth. A landslide of deceit swept the main character into the pit of emptiness, selfishness, and greed.

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Disappointment haunted Tom in the end. The end resulted in complete moral decadence as selfishness consumed him. These unattractive traits took time to develop before really injuring Tom. In this story Irving not only gives you an entertaining story but also gives you lesson on greediness.