



The devil and tom walker text analysis satire answer key

Thank you for your participation! In the short story "The Devil and Tom Walker", published in 1824 by Washington Irving, a conversion from an illustrative, descriptive tone to a revealing tone is a technique the author uses to give the reader an insight into the selfishness and greed of the character Tom Walker and his wife. Many literary elements are used in writings from this period in time and even writings from the present in order to convey a lesson, or moral, for the person reading to take away from the piece of literature. Washington Irving was one of these authors, and the use of literature is a convey a lesson, or moral, for the person reading to take away from the piece of literature. are all portrayed in this story in order to show how greed can lead to corruption ... show more content... The many occasions in The Devil in Tom Walker where this story is shown is satire and is meant to almost make humor out of how stupid or unusual the reactions, attitudes, or actions that come from both Tom and his wife. An instance where this occurs is when Irving describes what Tom found in the woods after his wife had taken it upon herself to go speak with the devil. In the story, Washington Irving states that although no one is even sure as to what had really happened to Tom's wife, when he finds an apron with only a human heart and liver wrapped up in it, he immediately assumes that these belong to his wife and she had gotten into a fight with the devil and this was all that was left of her. An example to show Tom's greediness is shown in this exact scene; "Tom consoled himself for the loss of his property, with the loss who, he considered, had done him a kindness." (pg). This situation shows obvious, harsh irony because in a normal case, someone finding their own wife's situation, they do not care for one another and Tom literally states that joy was brought to him when he found out that his wife was dead. Tom is such a greedy man that his wife has just been brutally murdered and is only thinking of himself and how happy he will be now that she is no longer there to bother him. Irving also writes about the condition that the findings were in saying that they were grouped with clumps of hair that seemed to be from the woodsman (the devil) showing that the wife must have fought back in some way against the devil. This is irony because of how stubborn the wife is, that she would even put up a fight and try to argue with the devil Washington Irving 1824Author BiographyPlot SummaryCharactersThemesStyleHistorical ContextCritical OverviewCriticismSourcesFurther ReadingThe Devil and Tom Walker was first published in 1824 as part of Washington Irving's collection of short stories. Gentleman Geoffrey Crayon, a fictional character created by the author, narrates the tale. He never refers to himself by name, however, but he states that the story has been a legend of the New England area for roughly a hundred years. Though the story has been widely read and enjoyed since its first appearance, the book Tales of a Traveller was poorly received by critics who complained that its writing was weak and unoriginal. The short story was a relatively new form of fiction at the time, and many of its conventions were still being defined by such writers as Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne. Some critics have given this as a reason for the artistic failure of many of the collection's stories. Despite this negative reception, the story about an unpleasant man who sells his soul to the devil in exchange for wealth is one of the works for which Irving is best remembered. Commonly referred to as a "comic New England Faust," the story bears many similarities to the German folktale of Faust, a man who trades his soul to the devil for a number of things, including love and money. Irving had travelled widely in Germany by the time he wrote ' "The Devil and Tom Walker," and it can be assumed that he was familiar with German Romantic writer Jo-hann Goethe's novel Faust. More so than European versions of the tale, Irving instills the tale with the moral ideals common to New England in the early nineteenth century. In an area settled by Quakers and Puritans, religious piety was of utmost importance to citizens, and the lesson of Tom Walker's ruin illustrated the sorrow that would befall unscrupulous sinners. Some have said that the "Devil and Tom Walker" was a well-known folktale in the New England area at the time, and Irving's retelling of it is a straightforward rendition of how he may have heard it from the region's Dutch inhabitants. Author BiographyWashington Irving is known as one of the first American authors to gain international recognition for his work. He is also a founder of the short story form. His first book, published in 1808, was Salmagundi; or, The Whim-Whams and Opinions of Launcelot Langstaff, Esq., and Others and was comprised of a variety of satiric pieces. His most famous early success was in 1809 with the publication of A History of the Knickerbocker family as told by the character of Diedrich Knickerbocker in the days when New York City was a colony of the Netherlands. Although Irving was renowned in his lifetime for his historical and biographical works, it was through his short stories, the most famous being "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Devil and Tom Walker," that he most strongly influenced American writing. He was born April 13, 1783, to William and Sarah Irving, prosperous New York City merchants. He had a relatively basic education, but he loved to read and write. When he was 19 years old, Irving began writing under the name of Jonathan Oldstyle for a newspaper owned by his brother. The young writer loved to travel, and in 1815 he moved to England to work in his family's export business. When the company failed, he began to write full-time. The result of this decision was a compilation of impressions, thoughts, and descriptions of his travels entitled The Sketch Book, which he published under the pseudonym of Geoffrey Crayon. Of the 32 stories in the collection, twenty are about life in England, and four are about America. From this collection came two of Irving's most popular tales, "Rip Van Winkle" and "A Legend of Sleepy Hollow," both of which became immediate classics. Irving believed that in order for an American writer to become successful, he or she had to imitate the literature of the British. In The Sketch Book and other stories, Irving successfully mixed logic and sentiment along with elements of the natural and supernatural worlds. The book was a great success in both Great Britain and the resulting profits enabled Irving to devote himself whole-heartedly to writing. Irving remained abroad for more than a decade after this initial publishing success. While in Germany, he became endiralled with the country's rich folklore. Spurred by the copious notes he took after long conversations with the people there, he wrote Tales of a Traveller, a book that attempted to gather together various elements of German folk tales. Today, the work is not known as one of Irving's strongest, but it does contain one of his most famous stories, The Devil and Tom Walker. In 1826, Irving traveled to Spain where he spent several years. He studied Spanish and became fluent in the language. In 1828, his Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus was published, a work of nonfiction in which Irving discusses with particular interest Columbus's conquest of the island of Granada. The following year, Irving was appointed secretary to the American embassy in London. During this time, Irving was awarded an honorary doctorate degree from Oxford University in England, proof that he had attained an exalted status within the British literary community. In 1832, he returned to the United States and travelled as far as Oklahoma, writing about it for people back East. At that time, the West was still undeveloped and Irving's account of the area in A Tour on the Prairies was the first glimpse of the American wilderness that many people had. In 1836, Irving settled on a small estate he named "Sunnyside" in Tarrytown, New York, close to the village of Sleepy Hollow he had written about in The Sketch Book. For over twenty years he lived there with his extended family while concentrating on his writing, which included a biography of British writer Oliver Goldsmith and a five-volume set on the life of George Washington. On November 28, 1859, shortly after completing his biography of Washington, Irving died and was buried nearby.Plot SummaryIn "The Devil and Tom Walker," set in New England in the early 1700s, a narrator never claims that the stories are true, only that they are widely believed. According to local legend, a treasure is buried in a dark grove on an inlet outside of Boston. It is said that Kidd the Pirate left it there under a gigantic tree and that the devil himself "presided at the hiding of the money, and took it under his guardianship." Since the pirate Kidd was hanged, no one has disturbed the treasure or challenged the devil's right to it. In the year 1727 a local man, the notorious miser Tom Walker, finds himself in the dark grove alone at dusk while taking a short cut back to his house. Tom is well known among the townspeople for his pitiful horse, his loud wife, and the couple's miserly habits in which they "conspired to cheat each other." Unaware that treasure lay nearby, Tom stops to rest against a tree outside the remains of an Indian fort. Despite local legends of the evil goingson at the site, Tom "was not a man to be troubled with any fears of the kind." After absent mindedly digging up an old skull, Tom is suddenly reprimanded by a gruff voice. The voice belongs to a man who is blackened by soot and grime and who introduces himself as the black woodman. Soon enough, Tom realizes that he is in the company of the devil himself. After a brief conversation, "Old Scratch," as Tom calls him, offers Tom the treasure in exchange for a few conditions. He declines. Back home, he tells his wife what transpired in the woods, and she is outraged that he passed up the opportunity for them to gain great wealth in exchange for his soul. She takes it upon herself to seek out the devil and strike a bargain on her own. After several trips to the fort in the woods, she becomes frustrated by the devil's unwillingness to appear to her. One day, she gathers the couple's few possessions of value in her apron and heads off for the woods. She never returns. Eventually, Tom wanders to the woods to find out what happened to her and discovers her apron hanging from a tree. It contains her heart and liver. Hoof-prints and clumps of hair at the base of the tree hint at a fierce struggle. "Old Scratch must have had a tough time of it!" he remarks. Neverthelessless, the next time the devil appears to Tom, he is eager to strike a deal now that he will not have to share anything with his wife. Balking at the devil's suggestion of becoming a slave-trader, Tom decides that he will become a usurer, or a moneylender, since gaining the treasure is contingent upon being employed in the devil's service. Tom immediately sets up shop in a "counting house" in Boston and attains great wealth by cheating people out of their money and charging them outrageous interest. He builds a luxurious house but refuses to spend money to furnish it properly. He buys an expensive carriage but fails to maintain it, and his horses he only begrudgingly feeds. When Tom grows old, he begins to worry about the terms of his deal with the devil and suddenly becomes a "violent church-goer" in an effort to cheat the devil out of receiving his soul. He reads the bible obsessively and prays loudly and long in church-goer" in an effort to cheat the devil out of receiving his soul. He reads the bible obsessively and prays loudly and long in church-goer" in an effort to cheat the devil out of receiving his soul. He reads the bible obsessively and prays loudly and long in church-goer" in an effort to cheat the devil out of receiving his soul. on a black horse in the midst of a thunderstorm to the Indian fort in the woods, never to be seen again. Town officials charged with settling Tom's estate discover his bonds and money reduced to cinders, and soon enough his house burns to the ground as well. Characters The DevilSee Old ScratchOld ScratchOld Scratch is the guise for the Devil, who appears in "The Devil and Tom Walker" as a dark-skinned man. Readers are told, however, that he is neither Indian (Native American) nor white. He has deep red eyes, wears a red sash, and carries his axe on his shoulder. He is the one who tempts Tom Walker with the proposition of wealth and who ultimately condemns him to ride a horse through the swamp where they made their bargain. The Devil's actions are similar to those he exhibits in other stories in which he is a featured character. In the Faust legend, as retold by Johann Goethe from German folklore, the Devil also strikes a deal with a man who desires wealth. It is the Devil's usual place in literature to tempt other characters, often by providing some hapless character a deal "too good to refuse." In "The Devil and Daniel Webster," written by Stephen Vincent Benet almost a century after Irving's story, a farmer who is down on his luck sells his soul to the Devil in exchange for seven years' prosperity. In Benet's tale, the Devil is also known as Scratch. In "Tom Walker," Old Scratch personifies temptation, which has existed ostensibly since the Garden of Eden, providing a colorful and dramatic way to present a character's conflict between choosing good and evil. Tom Walker Tom Walker is considered one of Washington Irving's least likeable character's conflict between choosing good and evil. Tom Walker is considered one of Washington Irving's least likeable character's conflict between choosing good and evil. Tom Walker is considered one of Washington Irving's least likeable character's conflict between choosing good and evil. Tom Walker is considered one of Washington Irving's least likeable character's conflict between choosing good and evil. Tom Walker is considered one of only thing that initially prevents him from striking a deal with Old Scratch (also known as the Devil) is his loathing for his wife. Walker states that he might have felt compelled to sell his soul to the Devil) is his loathing for his wife. decides against this partnership because Old Scratch wanted Tom to become a slave-trader. After his wife disappears and he finds her liver and heart wrapped up in her apron, Tom gives in to Old Scratch and accepts a job not as a slave-trader, but as a usurer, someone who lends money at outrageous interest rates. He becomes quite successful. He is still blunt, brusque, and unforgiving. His newfound wealth has not changed his basic attitudes, he still treats everyone with disrespect. When Old Scratch approaches Walker to collect on his own promise, Walker realizes that he must pay up and be responsible for his own promises of the still treats everyone with disrespect. When Old Scratch approaches Walker to collect on his own promise, we still treats everyone with disrespect. When Old Scratch approaches Walker to collect on his own promise, we still treats everyone with disrespect. When Old Scratch approaches Walker to collect on his own promise, we still treats everyone with disrespect. When Old Scratch approaches Walker to collect on his own promise, we show the still treats everyone with disrespect. We show the still treat the still treat treats everyone with the still treat treats every still treat trea to the Devil that he has seen the light. Unfortunately, his religious conversion has not helped him one bit because he is critical of everyone in the church, quick to judge them, and refuses to see the error of his ways. But Walker has achieved his wealth through greed, and as a result he becomes a prisoner of his own doing. Tom Walker is considered the "New England Faust" by some critics, a reference to the tale of soul-selling Faust by the German writer Johann Goethe. The primary difference between the two tales, however, was that Walker craved only money, whereas Faust craved a number of things, including love. At the time Irving wrote the story he was living in Germany and had become enthralled with folktales of the region, particularly with the Faust legend. Some critics have suggested that if "The Devil and Tom Walker" is interpreted as an allegory, then the character of Tom Walker" is interpreted as an allegory, then the character of Tom Walker represents the evolving business ethic of the young, industrial United States. Tom's Wife is a tall "termagant" woman, one who is fierce of temper, loud of tongue and strong of arm. She is as equally miserly as her husband, and they both plan ways to cheat each other. She has a minor role in the story, but her death sets the action in motion. When she finds out that her husband has declined the offer from Old Scratch, she takes it upon herself to go into the forest and bargain on her own behalf. The only time Tom ever confides in his wife is when he tells her of the deal set forth by Old Scratch and how he turned it down. Her greedy side overcomes her and they quarrel constantly about it. But, "the more she talked, the more and when she doesn't return, Tom goes in search of her. When he finds her heart and liver wrapped up in her apron, he suddenly feels liberated and immediately goes off to bargain with the Devil. Her greedy ways helped aid Tom in his decision to go back and visit Old Scratch; however, this time he is going of his own free will. In a way, Mrs. Walker wrapped up in her apron, he suddenly feels liberated and immediately goes off to helped him to keep his distance from the Devil because of her constant nagging and his need to go against her wishes. ThemesGreedGreed 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 parsimonious: 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." HypocrisyHypocrisy is evident throughout "The Devil and Tom Walker." When agreeing to the terms of the deal, Tom refuses to become a slave-trade because he claims to have a conscience. Yet has no problem becoming a moneylender who will profit by impoverishing others through unscrupulous business practices. In a further example of hypocrisy, Tom insists on keeping his deals with customers, which drive them to ruin, but then he conspires to cheat the devil on the terms of their own deal Thus, Topics for Further StudyDiscuss the relationship between Tom Walker and his wife. Do you feel that they deserve each other? Do you feel that they deserve? It has been said that Tom Walker is a New England version of Faust legend. Research the different versions of Faust legend. Research the different versions of Faust and see whether or not the character of Tom Walker is a New England version of Faust legend. resembles Faust.Explore Puritanism in New England in the 1700s and 1800s. How does Irving incorporate its tenets into his fiction?his public display of religious fervor has nothing to do with his belief in God but is rather an attempt to save himself from hell. In his final moment of hypocrisy, Tom denies that he has made a penny from an "unlucky land-speculator for whom he had professed the greatest friendship." When the devil corrupt, the action of "The Devil and Tom Walker" presented as an individual who has always been morally corruptionThough Tom Walker is presented as an individual who has always been morally corrupt. breeds more moral corruption, escalating to the greatest corruption of all, a pact with the devil. Described at the beginning of the story as a "meagre, miserly fellow," Tom's "house and its inmates had altogether a bad name." For one with few morals, becoming a corrupt moneylender presents no crises of character. In acquiring great wealth, Tom feels that the ends justify the means. Selling his soul to the devil presents a crisis to Tom only when he pauses to consider the afterlife. His conversion to religion, made specifically for the sake of his own personal interest rather than his faith in God, is a further act of moral corruption. Nevertheless, Tom cannot escape his fate, and Irving makes it clear the consequences of such "ill-gotten wealth." Though the narrator refers to the tale as a "story," he also states that "the truth of it is not to be doubted." StylePoint of ViewThis story is narrated by Geoffrey Crayon, a fictional character created by Irving who appears in a number of the author's works. The story's status of "legend" or "tall tale" is enhanced by Crayon's comments and the fact that he places the year it takes place, 1727, nearly a hundred years before the date he is writing Tales of a Traveller. Crayon refers to the rumors of treasure near Boston as "old stories" and states that the fate of Tom's wife "is one of those facts which have become confounded by a variety of historians." Through this secondhand narration, Irving shows that the tale has a long, local history, a primary characteristic of a folktale. Furthermore, the narrator states that "the story has resolved itself into a proverb, and is the origin of that popular saying, so prevalent in New England, of 'The Devil and Tom Walker.'" Such first-person narration adds to the feeling the reader has of being told a story in the oral tradition, the way most folktales are handed down from generation. Allegory many folktales are allegories. In an allegory, character of Old Scratch personifies evil or temptation. The murky woods full of quagmires in which Tom meets the devil are symbolic of his conscience, which, clouded by his greed, falls easily to the devil's temptation. Tom Walker, an unscrupulous moneylender, makes a pact with the devil and only later professes religious beliefs. Through these actions, Tom represents religious hypocrisy, which Irving shows will be punished. SettingIrving sought to spearhead the establishment of literature that was uniquely American. To that end, he set "The Devil and Tom Walker" in the New England area near Boston. In the early eighteenth century, this was one of the largest and most-established metropolitan areas in the growing United States. Irving describes the landscape of bluffs and swamps that were familiar to the area's inhabitants and made the site of Tom's meeting with the Europeans, providing a further uniquely American context. Furthermore, the New England setting highlights Irving's interest in Tom's morality. The region was populated by Puritans, Quakers, and Anabaptists, all strict Christian orders that were highly concerned with church members' moral consciousness. The murky morass in which Tom meets Old Scratch is also symbolic of Tom's character. Through this setting, Irving suggests that if one's heart is full of mud and quicksand, one is likely to encounter and succumb to temptation. Historical ContextA Young AmericaAt the time Irving wrote "The Devil and Tom Walker" in 1824, the United States was a new and growing country. As the land was populated by various groups of European immigrants, a uniquely AmericaAt the time Irving wrote "The Devil and Tom Walker" in 1824, the United States was a new and growing country. As the land was populated by various groups of European immigrants, a uniquely AmericaAt the time Irving wrote "The Devil and Tom Walker" in 1824, the United States was a new and growing country. groups merged and new traditions, brought on by circumstances, emerged. In literature, writers such as Washington Irving, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, James Fenimore Cooper, and Ralph Waldo Emerson published works that embodied the concepts of freedom, religious piety, and independence that characterized the country. By 1800, New York City was the largest city in the United States, but most of the West remained wild and unexplored. In 1826 the American Temperance Society was founded, giving a voice to those who were intolerant of alcohol consumption of any sort. In 1828, Andrew Jackson, a man known for his efforts to displace many Native American tribes, causing their widespread starvation and death, was elected president. New arrivals to the country, however, were uplifted by America's perceived spirit of Romanticism in his fiction, writing long descriptive passages about landscapes and relating the stories of hardworking immigrants who carved out a good living for their families. In the North, these ideas came to include the belief that slavery was immoral, and tension between the North and South over this period, like the novels by James Fenimore Cooper, were romantic tales of the adventures of common men, often concluding with strong morals outlining Puritan ideals of good and evil. "The Devil and Tom Walker," in whichCompare & Contrast1727: Religion is central to the lives of New England citizens. At the Salem Witch Trials, less than forty years before, twenty people accused of consorting with the devil are executed. In the Puritan tradition, the concepts of sin and penance guide many behaviors. These beliefs regarding good and evil form the basis of many communities' laws.1824: Religion continues to dominate daily life, though the Puritan tradition has lost much influence as less strict forms of Christianity, like Unitarianism, gain membership. Popularized by poet and essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson, Unitarianism espouses a blend of philosophy, spirituality, and practicality. The church is based in the town of Concord, Massachusetts. Today: A majority of people living in the United States belong to a house of worship. Though Christianity claims the largest number of followers, millions of Americans are Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, or Buddhist. 1780s: A majority of people living in the United States belong to a house of worship. Wolfgang Mozart writes Don Giovanni, an opera about a promiscuous man who is confronted by the devil.1832: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe publishes his tale of temptation and the devil, Faust. Today: The Witches and John Updike's The Witches and John Updike's The Witches and John Updike's The Satanic Verses and John Updike's The Witches and John Updike's The Satanic Verses and John Updike's The Satanic Verses and John Updike's The Witches and John Updike's The Witches and John Updike's The Satanic Verses and John Updike's The Witches and John Updike's The Witches and John Updike's The Satanic Verses and John Updike's The Witches and John Witches and John Updike's The Witches and John Updike's The Witches and John of Eastwick. Tom Walker, a corrupt individual who gets his comeuppance at the hands of the devil, typifies literature of this era. Critical OverviewThough the "The Devil and Tom Walker" has become one of Irving's most famous stories, it received a lackluster response when it was published in Tales of a Traveller in 1824. Darrel Abel remarks in American Literature: Colonial and Early National Writing that this collection of Irving's stories was "one of his poorest. . . . a batch of hackwork pieced together" in an attempt to use "the German materials he had been accumulating." One of the original reviews, quotes Abel, attacked Irving personally, calling him "indisputably feeble, unoriginal and timorous." Irving was hurt by these accusations, particularly because they came from British writers, for whom he had great esteem and whose style he had tried to emulate. In retrospect, Eugene Current-Garcia says in Studies in Short Fiction that the story "foreshadows the best of Hawthorne's fictional exposure of Yankee shrewdness and Puritan hypocrisy." Current-Garcia also credits Irving for helping to develop the genre of the short story; "If he did not actually invent the short story, he had indeed set the pattern for the artistic recreation of common experience in short fictional form." By the mid-twentieth century, with the critics' adverse reaction to Tales of a Travellerlong faded, opinion had solidly changed in Irving's favor. William Hedges wrote in Washington Irving: An American Study 1802-1832 that "The Devil and Tom Walker" is one of Irving's best works. CriticismElisabeth Piedmont-Marton Irving's best works. the following essay, she discusses the conventions of the narrative sketch as practiced by Washington Irving in "The Devil and Tom Walker." What Do I Read Next?A History of New York, Irving's 1809 novel in which Dutchman Diedrich Knickerbocker recounts the settling of New York by the Dutch, in a comic and highly inaccurate manner. The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent, is comprised of 32 short stories, many of which deal with England. The collection includes two of Irving's most celebrated works: "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." Moby Dick, Herman Melville's 1851 epic of the seafaring Captain Ahab's quest to conquer the great white whale, Moby Dick. So singleminded is Ahab's goal that he fails to realize that he is being ruined by greed and deceit. The Pardoner's Tale, Geoffrey Chaucer's tale that explores "the curse of avarice and cupidity." Three bandits attempt to become wealthy through deceitful means, but each of them attempts to usurp the others' gold. In the final analysis, all three are destroyed by their own greed. This story is the basis for the movie, Treasure of the Sierra Madre. "Young Goodman Brown" by Nathaniel Hawthorne, first published in 1835. An allegorical tale of a pious Puritan New England man who encounters his fellow townspeople engaged in the black mass. Hawthorne was a contemporary of Irving's, and both writers were concerned with creating an American literature that featured the tenets of New England Puritanism.' "The Devil and Daniel Webster" a short story by Steven Vincent Benet first published in 1937. A New England folktale that won an O. Henry Memorial Award, the story concerns a poor farmer strikes a deal with the devil, who appears as a lawyer. In an attempt to back out of the deal after obtaining prosperity, the farmer hires Daniel Webster to defend him in a court trial presided over by Nathaniel Hawthorne. "The Devil and Tom Walker" was published in 1824 in Washington Irving's Tales of a Traveller. It is widely recognized as the best story in the book and the third best of all his tales (after "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow.") Having established an international literary reputation, Irving had committed himself to a career as a professional man of letters, and the mixed critical received stung him badly. Modern readers of stories in this volume are often struck by the folk or fairy-tale quality of the narratives and by Irving's evocation of an older American landscape rich in symbolic texture. Irving's career and work is best understood in the context of the enormous cultural and ideological changes transforming the new nation at the time. By the 1820s, the United States had concluded its second war with Britain, Lewis and Clark had already explored the West, and the population grew from a little over five million to nine-and-a-half million in the years 1800-1820. Still, 97 percent of Americans lived in rural communities. The country was poised for great change: By 1850 the population reached 21 million and the proportion of urban dwellers increased sharply. During these turbulent years, inventions that spurred industrial growth, like the steamboat, the cotton gin, the telegraph, and eventually the railroad, dramatically shaped Americans' sense of themselves. Irving was not an unqualified believer in the popular notions of progress and expansion. He consciously chose British literary models and spent most of his life living outside of the United States because he believed that the only hope for American culture was to attach itself to the traditions of Britain. Tales of a Traveller was written and published in England, where Irving enjoyed a large audience and had cultivated a reputation for charm and civility. His literary depictions of the New World tend to find value in times past when American culture was more closely tied to the values of the Old World. One of the reasons that Irving had such a large readership was that his writing harkened back to an older time, before materialism and commercialism became leading forces in the newly emerging American society. Nevertheless, as many readers of "The Devil and Tom Walker" are well aware, Irving's fictional America is hardly a new Eden, unspoiled and uncorrupt. Rather, the fictional landscape of the "The Devil and Tom Walker" is written in the genre that Irving practically inventedthe fictional sketch. One of his innovations was the fictional narrator, in this case Geoffrey Crayon, who views events and reports local legends with good-natured skepticism. The device of the narrator serves several purposes for Irving. First, it allows him to distance himself from his readers. Many critics suggest that he started to rely on this mechanism when he sensed that his reading public was dwindling. Second, the intervention of Crayon permits Irving's Use of the Gothic Mode," this device allowed Irving, a man who subscribed to the dominant realistic philosophies of the day, to present "ghosts and goblins as actual beings" without having to explain them as natural phenomena. As readers, by extension, we do not have to believe that Tom Walker actually consorted with the devil, only that the legend says he did. Irving's use of these gothic themes within the framework of the fictional sketch raises another issue, however. Irving's satirical purposes makes less important the question whether the devil, the pirate Kidd, or the treasure are real. In an allegory like "The Devil and Tom Walker" the fantastic elements are "real" in the sense that they represent something else. For example, Irving and his ideal readers— those in on the joke—get to poke fun at the fictional audience for this story, those who actually believe that Tom Walker met the devil in the woods, made a deal with him, and later was carried off to his fate in a carriage driven by black horses. The narrator is a kind of intermediary between audiences, story in New England, Irving is invoking the young country's colonial past. The description of the dark forest with its dark history of an Indian massacre hardly portrays a people proudly connected to their own noble heritage. Instead, Irving seems to suggest that this is a community content to bury and forget old atrocities, and, more broadly, that the nation eager to bury its own history is doomed to be haunted by it. The woods in this tale also invoke the Puritan's sense that the wilderness is the habitat of all sorts of evil. Readers will recognize the similarity to the dark wood of Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown," for example. Tom's short cut is, of course, a quicker route through the woods, but it also represents what Irving sees as the American tendency toward quick fixes and quick profits. Irving's allegory in "The Devil and Tom Walker" is very broadly drawn. In fact, many readers agree with Mary Weatherspoon Bowden in her book Washington Irving when she says that "occasionally [his] allegory gets in the way of the story." The example that Bowden points out is that neither the pirate Kidd nor the treasure, not having any allegorical work to do, ever reappear after the first paragraph. After the pirate and the treasure are dispensed with, however, what remains is a stinging indictment of what Irving believes to be the state of economics and politics in the United States.Source: Elisabeth Piedmont-Marton, for Short Stories for Students, Gale Research, 1997.Charles G. Zug IIIIn the following essay, Zug talks about the aspects of common folklore that Irving incorporatedinto "The Devil and Tom Walker," particularly those he gathered in his travels to Germany.Although it is unquestionably one of Washington Irving's finest tales, "The Devil and Tom Walker" has never attracted much critical attention. First published in 1824 in Part IV of Tales of a Traveller, the tale recounts the fate of an avaricious New Englander, who sells his soul to the Devil in return for Captain Kidd's treasure, and is finally carted off to Hell after a long and profitable career as a usurer in colonial Boston. For the most part, critics have been content to note that the tale is "a sort of comic New England Faust," or that it "is redolent of the American soil." In other words, the consensus is mat the tale has certain Germanic overtones but is indigenous to the young American republic in which Irving grew up. No one, however, has really attempted to examine the possible sources for this work or note the complex manner in which Irving has interwoven numerous motifs from American and German folklore. . . . At the outset, it is significant that no source has ever been discovered for "The Devil and Tom Walker." tale, but this is rather inaccurate, for Tom Walker is in no sense a scholar who desires to extend the limits of human knowledge. In actuality, it is not the Faust theme but the well-known motif M211, Man sells soul to devil, that lies at the heart of the tale. This, however, is only one of numerous folk motifs used, and taken by itself, it provides little insight into the source or structure of the tale. The problem here is that unlike "Rip Van Winkle," which is largely patterned on a series of folk motifs garnered by Irving from a wide variety of sources. It is important at this point to understand the exact distinction between a tale and a motif. The Devil and Tom Walker" is based on a series of folk motifs garnered by Irving from a wide variety of sources. It is important at this point to understand the exact distinction between a tale and a motif. former is a complete and independent narrative which consists of one or more motifs traditionally associated with each other, while the latter is "the smallest element in a tale," "items in the background of the action," and most commonly "single incidents." Although based on folklore like "Rip Van Winkle," "The Devil and Tom Walker" is thus a much more complex and fused mem into a new and harmonious whole. That he was highly skilled in assembling these traditional motifs is evidenced by the number of critics who have accepted "The Devil and Tom Walker" as a rewritten version of a folklore, it is necessary to briefly consider some of Irving's activities between the publication of The Sketchbook in 1819 and the writing of "The Devil and Tom Walker" in 1824. The key event here appears to have been the yearlong tour through Germany in 1822 and 1823. Prior to this journey, Irving had shown an increasing interest in Germany in 1822 and 1823. Prior to this journey, Irving's contact with German folklore at this time was limited to the few works over which he struggled to learn the Germany." The trip to Germany in 1822 gave Irving a new opportunity: a chance to investigate and gather up German folklore at first hand. As he wrote to Thomas Storrow at the beginning of the tour, "I mean to get into the confidence of every old woman I meet with in Germany and get from her, her wonderful budget of stories." In other words, Irving was out to collect folklore in its purest state, directly from oral transmission. Stanley Williams notes this shift in Irving's attitude, commenting that "he now formed a resolution that folklore should not merely entertain the knight-errant but should earn his lordship's bread and butter. He would really follow that impulse felt at Abbotsford in 1817 and create his volume of German legends. The tour now became a hunt for gnomes, pixies, and phantom armies; and he extended the journal into a saving bank for this species of coin." That the hunt was clearly successful is revealed by the numerous legends and scraps of lore that may be found in the letters and journals written during the German tour. At Salzburg, for example, Irving noted that "the mountain regions are full of fable and elfin story, and I had some wonderful talesond by the numerous legends and scraps of lore that may be told me." In his journal, he even wrote out seven local legends from this region, all of them concerned with the imposing figure of Untersberg Mountain. Walter Reichart points out that none of these legends appears to have a literary source, "so that it seems likely that Irving actually heard them from some of the inhabitants." Since Irving had little time or ability for reading German during his travels, this conclusion is almost inescapable. In addition, the letters and journals abound with fragments of and brief references to well-known tales and motifs, such as "the Emperor and his army shut up in the enchanted Bullets." Altogether, it appears that Irving rapidly enlarged his working knowledge of German folklore, and there are numerous entries indicating that he also enjoyed retelling the tales to his friends. The German experience thus served not only to increase his "savings bank" of potential source materials, but more important, to teach him the technique of combining and needed. As the following analysis reveals, Irving's use of folklore after his German motifs, it is important to note that practically the entire plot is made up of elements from folklore. In fact the only nontraditional portions of the plot are the two sections which I have labeled the domestic and financial subplots. The tale opens with three American motifs built around the legend of Captain Kidd. Immediately following is the domestic subplot, which is reminiscent of the marital situation in "Rip Van Winkle" and serves to develop the mutual enmity between Tom and his wife. Merely to infuriate her, Tom obstinately refuses to close his pact with the Devil. She, therefore, runs off with the family silverware to make her own bargain, and is apparently carried off by the Devil after the pact is actually completed that he inserts the financial subplot. This section describes the state of affairs in colonial Boston, neatly delineating the avarice and religious hypocrisy of the inhabitants. With the uttering of the oath, Irving again returns to the main plot, and the tale moves swiftly to a close. Taken as a whole, the plot thus consists of a central chain of folk motifs into which two realistic subplots have been inserted. . . . Irving's choice of the Kidd legends as a framework for "The Devil and Tom Walker" was a good one, for it placed the tale in a distinctly American setting. Willard Hallam Bonner, who has made an extensive study of Kidd, notes that "the composite" Irving certainly never intended 'The Devil and Tom Walker' to be taken as a folktale. His purpose was to produce an entertaining, fast-moving story based largely on German folk motifs and firmly rooted in an American locale." However, this legend is a limited one, in that it generally contains only a few, often recurring motifs. There is first a widespread belief that Kidd did bury his treasure, either along the southern New England coast or up the Hudson River. In addition, there is first a widespread belief that the treasure is guarded either by a slain sailor or worse, by "the Earl of Hell himself, at whose command Kidd 'buried his Bible in the sand.'" As noted in the earlier plot outline, Irving used these American motifs at the beginning of the tale, although he shifted the place of burial to the Boston region. With the introduction of the domestic subplot, which follows immediately, Irving moved away from the Kidd legends and began using German motifs which concerned the Devil. Apparently it was the Kidd stories heard from Colonel Aspinwall that gave Irving the initial inspiration and got the tale underway. Once started, Irving inserted the two realistic subplots and used the figure of the Devil, first mentioned in the American legend, as the means of transition to the numerous German materials. . . . Irving certainly never intended "The Devil and Tom Walker" to be taken as a folktale. His purpose was to produce an entertaining, fast-moving story based largely on German folk motifs and firmly rooted in an American locale. In this he was eminently successful, and "The Devil and Tom Walker" deserves to be ranked with "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" as one of his best tales. Stanley Williams has pointed out that the major flaw in Tales of a Traveller was Irving's failure "to draw bravely from that wonderful stock of German legend in his notebooks and in his mind." While this analysis is true for most of these tales, it is clearly not applicable to "The Devil and Tom Walker," where the carefully assembled chain of German motifs provides the backbone for a unique and vigorous plot structure. Still a second valid criticism of the Tales of a Traveller is that Irving did not succeed "in transplanting German legends into American settings where the native landscape could reflect the spirit of the tale." skillfully introduced the German materials through the use of the native Kidd legends, using the figure of the Devil as the unifying force for all of the motifs. By adding the two realistic subplots, a few brief character sketches, and some local history and legend, Irving succeeded in developing a truly American atmosphere. As William L. Hedge has observed, Irving was able "to bring certain aspects of Puritanism into dramatic focus by connecting Yankee shrewdness and Puritan respectability." As previously noted, this satire on the avarice and hypocrisy of colonial Boston is skillfully integrated with the folklore Irving used, and the final motif, Devil's money becomes ashes, is so well chosen that it serves as a fitting epilogue to the tale. Once the construction of ' "The Devil and Tom Walker" is laid bare, it becomes evident that Irving, at least after his German tour, was no "slavish" imitator but rather a highly skilled manipulator of both American and German folklore. In avoiding the stock Gothic machinery and a distant, foreign setting for an American locale, and in assembling a chain of folk motifs that was distinctly his own invention, he created a vigorous tale that is still very much alive and meaningful today. This is not to assert that Irving possessed a first-rank imagination, as his successors Poe and Hawthorne did. Instead, as his contemporary Coleridge might have observed, Irving was endowed with a mechanical rather than an organic imagination. In this sense, he is not unlike the medieval French author Chretien de Troyes, who drew so heavily on traditional storyteller's skill in relating folk motifs and so, in tales such as "The Devil and Tom Walker," he was able to recombine and reshape such motifs into new and significant forms. Source: Charles G. Zug III, "The Construction of 'The Devil and Tom Walker': A Study of Irving's Later Use of Folklore," in New York Folklore, "in New York Folklore," in New York Folklore, "in N longer article, Lynch talks about the devil as a character in literature, including his appearance in "The Devil and Tom Walker," one the devil's first appearances in American literature. In the spring of 1951, when the emotionalism of the MacArthur controversy was at its highest, a mob of people in one of our western towns hanged Secretary of State Acheson in effigy. If this act had taken place about one hundred seventy years ago, there probably would have been one difference—the figure of the Revolution that when Benedict Arnold's treason became known his effigy was burned and hanged throughout the towns of America, invariably with an image of the devil thrusting him into hell with a pitchfork. Even as late as 1828, the school board of Lancaster, Ohio, declared the railroad a device of the devil. And when Irving's "The Devil and Tom Walker" appeared, a contemporary critic of 1825 wrote: "If Mr. Irving believes in the existence of Tom Walker's master we can scarcely conceive how he can so earnestly jest about him; at all events, we would counsel him to beware lest his own spells should prove fatal to him." Irving, Hawthorne, and Poe, therefore, being fairly close to the times when the devil as one of their characters. The devil as a character is, of course, a manifestation of romantic writing concerning the supernatural. It is obvious, however, that he is not to be associated only with the so-called romantic period, for he has appeared throughout our literature from the writings of Cotton Mather to Whittaker Chambers' article on the history of the devil in Life magazine of February 2, 1948. . . . A biographer of Irving stated that ' "The Devil and Tom Walker" may possibly be called "a sort of comic New England Faust, for during 1822 and 1823 Irving had read and reread Goethe." Calling him a New England Faust, for during 1822 and 1823 Irving had read and reread Goethe." accurately when he states that the story "owes very little to foreign influences. Though he is interested in popular legend, and shows sympathy with the Romantic movement of Europe, Irving's story is redolent of American soil." Irving's devil is of the pure New England variety—and he could hardly have been thinking of Goethe's regal Mephistopheles when he wrote his story. Irving places his humorous tale in Massachusetts history during the office of Governor Belcher (1730-1741). Tom Walker, at no point a serious figure, finds himself following an "ill chosen route through a swamp thickly grown with the great gloomy pines and hemlocks which made it dark at noonday." After setting the atmosphere in much the same way that Hawthorne did later, Irving recounts the legend of the "Old Indian Fort" of which the savages held incantations here and made sacrifices to the evil spirit." After this reference to the superstition of the early New England folk, the devil suddenly appears unannounced—a technique used by most devil-writers. Tom had just uncovered a skull when a gruff voice says, "Let that skull alone!" Irving describes the devil in accordance with his common title in New England, "The Black Man.""You are commonly called Old Scratch," Tom remarks calmly enough to the devil. "Theorem a skull when a gruff voice says, "Let that skull alone!" Irving describes the devil in accordance with his common title in New England, "The Black Man.""You are commonly called Old Scratch," Tom remarks calmly enough to the devil. same at your service," the devil replies. Irving explains that Tom "had lived so long with a termagant wife, that he did not even fear the devil." The outcome of this meeting is that the devil romises Captain Kidd's buried treasure if Tom will sell his soul. Returning to his wife, Tom tells her of the devil." contract, he refuses in order to irritate her with his perversity. The wife then sets out to make a deal with "Old Scratch," and Irving comments, "Though a female scold is generally considered a match for the devil, yet in this instance she appears to have had the worst of it." This remark is reminiscent of the imported English ballad "The Farmer's Curst Wife," wherein the wife is taken off to hell by the devil and then brought back to the farmer because she is too unpleasant even for the devil. But Tom's wife is never seen again, and when Tom goes to the swamp, he sees signs of a fierce struggle. "Egad," he says to himself, "Old Scratch must have had a tough time of it!" Feeling gratitude to the swamp, he sees signs of a fierce struggle. devil for carrying off his wife, Tom then decides to do business with him. But the devil is crafty, and after some delay Tom again meets "the black woodsman," who now affects indifference while casually humming a tune."Though he is interested in popular legend, and shows sympathy with the Romantic movement of Europe, Irving's story is redolent of American soil," If one were to imagine an actor taking this devil's part, Charles Laughton might well be an appropriate choice. The contract is eventually made between them. The devil tries to make the condition that Tom enter the slave trade, but Tom refuses, agreeing, however, to open a usury business in Boston. There are two explanations as too why Irving mentioned the slave trade here: that he was repelled by a barbarous practice that the devil fosters with primary interest, and/or that he wanted to achieve suspense by putting into the reader's mind the idea that Tom might escape that fulfillment of the contract because of a momentary humane feeling. Using Kidd's treasure to build up a fortune in making loans and then foreclosing, Tom, as he grows older and more conscious of the terms of the contract, becomes a religious zealot, carrying the Bible at all times in order to ward off the devil. Irving refers to the legend that Tom buried his horse upside down because when the world would be turned upside down on the last day he

would be able to give the devil a run for it. But according to Irving, if he did this, it was of no help to him, "at least so says the authentic old legend." Tom is caught off guard without his Bible while he is foreclosing a mortgage, and is seized during a storm and carried off in the direction of the swamp and the Old Indian Fort, never to be seen again. Irving concludes the legendary story:Let all griping money-brokers lay this story to heart. The truth of it is not to be doubted. The very hole under the oak trees, whence he dug Kidd's money, is to be seen to this day; and the neighboring swamp and old Indian fort are often haunted nights by a figure on horseback, in morning-gown and white cap, which is doubtless the troubled spirit of the usurer. In fact, the story has resolved itself into a proverb, and is the origin of the popular saying, so prevalent throughout New England, of "The Devil and Tom Walker." Irving would be allow that the popular saying. The New York: Barron's Education he refers continue to be used until the twentieth century. . . . Source: James J. Lynch, "The Devil in the Writings of Irving, Boston: Twang, Publishers, 1981. Current-Garcia, Eugene. "Irving Sette Pattern: Notes on Professionalism and the Art of the Short Fiction, Vol. X, No. 4, Fall, 1973, pp. 327-41. Hedges, William L. Washington Irving, edited by Donald A. "Irving's Use of the Gothic Mode," in Critical Essays on Washington Irving, edited by Donald A. Ringe, G. K. Hall, 1990, pp. 202-17. Further ReadingRubin-Dorsky, Jeffrey. "Washington Irving, edited by Noelle Watson, St. James Press, 1994, pp. 262-65. A biographical and bibliographical sketch on Washington Irving.

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