

# Example of essay on the illusory nature of arnold friend

[Life](#), [Friendship](#)



In literature, there are many notorious characters that have their own astonishing qualities and do take part in decadent actions. However, none has struck such a devastating weird chord as Arnold Friend. He is among the chief characters in Joyce Carol Oates novel titled "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" If individual actions are anything to go by in determining the character of an individual, Arnold Friend is a seducer of young girls and an incarnation of the devil. The author uses both actions and appearance to present Arnold Friend. This adds to his devilish persona and the so many devilish acts that he does all contribute to decreasing his likeability (Weinberger, 125). Through his speech and interaction with other characters, his traits are revealed. This creates a long lasting impression. Arnold Friend can outright be a devil in the form of a human being. His traits create a character with a physical form that is apparently unreal. His actions and physical appearance further makes it hard for anyone to make a deduction that Arnold Friend is a real character. Everything about him seems unreal and quite peculiar.

Arnold Friend seems completely divergent from human characteristics. Paying a close attention to his way of dressing and his body type, one realizes that Arnold Friend was just trying to live like any other ordinary boy in order to attract girls. Connie describes his way of dressing and says, "as if he were indeed wearing a wig", this further indicates that he is illusive and his entire physique is just an imagination (Weinberger, 89). Arnold Friend takes a human appearance only to avoid scaring young girls away. His face is described as familiar yet it was in mask. The author's intention was to show how one may take after good people in order to take advantage of

situations. People conceal their real identity so as to fulfill their own selfish interests not taking into account the effects that their actions will have on the victims (Rank, 98). The use of the unreal character enables readers to discover various things about situations that they have ever been into and prepare them to effectively handle such situations if they reoccur in future. The character intensifies the author's intention to show how people hide their identities and conspicuously draw others into problems and leave them swimming in murky waters. Arnold Friend was able to combine romance and violence to lure Connie into love yet it was clear that Connie was a young girl not ready for parenthood.

His jokiness, outward appearance is unreal and his identity is hidden in a false name, " Arnold Friend" that he uses so that people and specifically girls can associate him with positive experiences. He is satanic and comes to Connie in the form of a friend. The unreal nature of Arnold is further reiterated when Connie realizes that she could not place him (Weinberger, 97). His visit therefore just appears to be a dream that comes to Connie in an imaginary world. She experiences a feeling of *déjà vu* that is commonly associated with dreams (Weinberger, 76).

Arnold seems to know everything. When he meets Connie, he tells her that he knows where her parents have gone, when they will come back and the name of her best friend. He further tells her, " I know who you were with last night" (Oates, 9). Furthermore, he draws an X in the air and it remained visible for quite some minutes. These are things that cannot be done by a real person. It therefore follows that Arnold was an unreal character. Connie realizes that everything including the music that looked so familiar and

associated with Arnold was only half-real.

Arnold Friend is also quite similar to Charles Schmid a serial killer who murdered two adolescent girls (Weinberger, 76). His way of dressing and speaking to fit among his prey is quite similar to that of Arnold Friend. The author drew most of Arnold's traits from him.

## **Works Cited**

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