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Shanelle Ramos Professor Purugganan English 112 5 June 20 Dealing with the Devil: Arnold Friend and the Idle mind Everything that glitters isn't gold. In life everyone reaches stages where they consider what's normal isn't fun anymore and they choose to take a look into what is attractive and popular. It is common for people to think the grass is greener on the other side, but an idle mind will always leads to destruction and the devil loves an idle mind. A protagonist by the name of Connie in the story short story entitled "Where are you going, Where have you been" by Joyce Carol Oates, soon learns that her trashy daydreams and self-absorbed behavior only leads to disaster by way of a man named Arnold Friend. Arnold Friend character in this story represents the devil. Connie, a horny high school freshman shows a strong disdain for family values but more concern with social reputation and slutty appearances. As the summer approaches she and her high school girlfriends obnoxiously parade the town seeking amusement from boys. Sneaky and scantily clad, Connie deceives her parents on a regular basis. While around her parents Connie dresses conservative and behaves graciously, reversely, in company of her friends she goes for the hooker look and carries herself as if she were a mindless teenage squander. Soon trouble finds it way in this rebellious teen's life as she become more curious about her developing sexuality. In this exciting short story, Joyce Oates thrilled the reader with an intense built up suspense followed by a promising and thought provoking climax that not even the main character/ Connie could see coming. The story of a young naive and considerably dense girl takes place in a country suburb in a small and slow paced town. The story is told through the eyes of a mature, relaxed elder. The reader recognizes the use of music, as it holds a hypnotizing effect upon the young socialite as she endeavors a journey that

leads to disaster. Vain and socially obscure, Connie feels confronted with the constant comparison of her older and more mature sister named June. More accepted and valued by her parents, June assisted in household chores and earnestly saved money. By contrast, Connie's friends did not accept June; she was favored more by her parents. " She sat on the bed, barefoot and listened for an hour and a half to a program called XYZ Sunday Jamboree, record after record of hard fast shrieking songs, she sang along with" (Giota/Oates) Following the need to engage in rebellious and worldly activities, Connie held immature aspirations of seeking thrills, the main character foolishly wastes her time thinking of nothing and listening to music all day, she shows no thought or action of obtaining more substance in her character. Connie's worldly and promiscuous behavior soon attracts the devil himself. Honestly speaking, with the time Connie spent daydreaming about trash, she could have sought to become enlightened and about anything, be it family or world issues, but instead she chose to be a lofty regular at a local burger joint. Jane Barstow from the Salem press analyzes Connie's actions: " For Connie, " the bright-lit, fly-infested restaurant" is a " sacred building" and the omnipresent music is like a " church service" always in the background, something on which she can depend. As if to parody Christian symbolism, Oates describes the " grinning boy, " holding a hamburger aloft, which caps the bottle-shaped restaurant. It is here that Connie finds the " haven and blessing" otherwise missing in her life. Barstow, (Jane) M. " Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?." Masterplots II: Short Story Series, Revised Edition (2004): 1-3. MagillOnLiterature Plus. Web. 6 June 2012. Sadly, it was Connie's idle mind attracted the devilish and scheming Arnold Friend. Connie refused to go to a Sunday BBQ with her family and chose instead to idle at

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home alone. Arnold Friend, a deceitful thirty- something portrays himself as a innocent eighteen year old he approaches Connie and ultimately rapes her. Through his convincing tone and devilish persistence, Arnold friend is viewed by most literary critics as Satan himself, The story has been subject to differing interpretations by various critics. It has been seen as an inverted fairy tale in which Connie is joined not with Prince Charming but with the Prince of Darkness. These readers have pointed out similarities between Arnold Friend and the devil: his disguise, his supernatural knowledge of the whereabouts of Connie's family, his ability to lure Connie to him against her will, even his very name, which is by no coincidence close to " Arch Fiend. "

(Korb) When we take a look at the sinister character of " Friend" it easy to interpret him as the devil. Take out the " r" in Arnold Friend's name and you clearly discern what Arnold represents; an old Fiend. Connie was attracted to Friend's gold car, a color that is divine and often classified as the color of the gods. Before raping Connie, the satanic Friend inserts a boot in between Connie's front door, " One of his boots was strange at an angle, as if his foot wasn't in it" (592). The ways the reader of this short story can distinguish Friend's character to be the devil is by noticing through the story Friend has trouble standing in his boots. Surely, Friend, like Satan has Goat leg, Clearly that is why he cannot stand in his boots. Exploring this further, The words scribed on Friends car" MAN THE FLYING SAUCER" indeed has the same letters that spells out " HESATANLUCIFER" . " Through it all, however, she privately harbors innocent dreams of ideal love. One day, while home alone, she is approached by a strange man ominously named Arnold Friend, who is determined to seduce her and take her away. Rather than use force, Friend insinuates his way into Connie's mind and subdues her vulnerable and

emerging sexuality" Mann, Barry, and Alvin K. Benson. "Joyce Carol Oates." *Critical Survey Of Short Fiction, Second Revised Edition* (2001): 1-7. MagillOnLiterature Plus. Web. 6 June 2012

Ultimately, "Where are you going, where have you been," expresses the need for teens to be conscious and active in positive thoughts and aspirations. The main character had a host of troublesome thoughts and instinctively acted upon them. When people are not present minded they become inhibited dangerous and undesirable lifestyle. The need to be present minded as a young person is great for such as reason as this. Rape and violence not only occurs when you don't expect it, but it also occurs when are empty minded and not aware. In the perspective of a young person, Cars can represent freedom, popularity and liberty, but In the story, Connie was attracted to Satan through his car and the persuasion. Considering a conscience and active Connie, this rape would not have existed. In closing, Arnold and his secret code that is was scribed on his car 33, 19, 17 is also a bible verse that also questions the a character of Where are you going, where have you been. It is clear that the author, Joyce Carol oats his finessed the idea of an eternal presence in this book. Using this story as a warning and as an example of what an idle mind brings can not only spare your life but also your innocence. Citations and sources: \* Where are you going, where have you been/Intro to fiction/XJ Kennedy Diana Giota 11th ED. Where are you going, where have you been?, Joyce Carol Oates, Copyright 1970 Ontario review \*A summary and analysis of Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?. Barstow, Jane M. "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?." *Masterplots II: Short Story Series, Revised Edition* (2004): 1-3. MagillOnLiterature Plus. Web. 6 June 2012. \* Korb, Rena. "An overview of "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been? ." *Short Stories* <https://assignbuster.com/shanelle-ramos/>

for Students. Detroit: Gale, 2002. Literature Resource Center. Web. 13 June 2012. \*\* Where are you going, where have you been/Intro to fiction/XJ Kennedy Diana Giota 11th ED. Where are you going, where have you been?, Joyce Carol Oates, Copyright 1970 Ontario review(592)