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October 18, 2016

Language Arts: Period 1,2

### A Ripple with Change

When you gain knowledge, you essentially change how much you know and become more intelligent, overtime knowledge will separate you from people . “Flowers for Algernon”, a fictional short story by Daniel Keyes is a story that presents the changes knowledge and intelligence can create. Charlie Gordon, Daniel Keyes’ main character, is a 37-year-old-man who, at first has a low intellect, seen with his IQ of 68, but then undergoes an operation and triples his IQ. That however does not stay for long, realizing he will lose his intelligence, he tries to research why, and eventually becoming his normal self again. Daniel Keyes explores the theme Change (Gate Icon; Over time), by showing how intelligence changes relations, through Charlie’s character arc, and by humanizing Charlie to become more relatable.

Further explaining my reasoning, Daniel Keyes showing change through the effects of Charlie’s intelligence. At the beginning of the story it is showed that Charlie’s “friends” are mocking him (289), but since he does not quite have an intelligence to figure out that they are only mocking him, he chooses to say that they are his friends. Over the course of the story, as Charlie gains more and more intelligence, he realizes as they are mocking his low intellect, and feels embarrassed (293). After most of his co-workers realize that Charlie is intellectually superior to them, they start a petition to get him fired (296-297). In this happening he realizes he is more lonely than he has ever been (295). Charlie’s gain in intelligence might actually separating him from everyone he has known, changing his relations.

Further advancing my other point, Daniel Keyes also presents change through Charlie's character arc. This evidence can be found when Charlie is able to perceive inkblots, "One of them [inkblots] looked like a pair of bats tugging at something. Another looked like two men fencing with swords. I imagined all sorts of things (294).", this is an improvement, Charlie has changed from the beginning of the story, now seeing an image in the inkblots. It also can be seen that his grammar, punctuation, and spelling have drastically improved. Another change in Charlie's character arc was the change in his work life, stating that, "People don't talk to me much any more or kid around the way they used to. It makes the job kind of lonely (295)", showing that his intelligence is changing the relationships with his co workers. It also shows that the change in his intelligence has changed people's perspective, almost as if they fear him.

Elaborating on my final point, the theme is also explored through the humanization of Charlie, he is human of course, but he was not as smart as most humans are, so he was not very relatable, in the sense that he felt the same emotions as we did. After the operation, he starts to say/write things we the reader have not heard him say, "I hate that mouse (288)", showing his growth in intelligence also contributes to his growth in emotion. Previously he took the inkblot test, and got frustrated with it, but he never outright said he hated to test, but here he says he hates Algernon. Another way he was humanized, was during his date with Ms. Kinnian he says, "I'm in love with Miss Kinnian (296).", humanizing him through an emotion that most if not all people feel. Most people can relate to feeling the way Charlie does about Miss Kinnian to someone else. Charlie goes through changes in the story that make him as smart as most people, and as relatable as most people, to lose it all and make the reader sympathize with Charlie's situation at the end of the story. This can be argued that Daniel Keyes wanted change in the treatment of disabled people

Presenting all my thoughts, the author, Daniel Keyes wrote this story with the theme, change in mind. This theme is important because it presented an idea, a change in intelligence will change your relations; it showed change through the main character Charlie Gordon's character arc, gaining intelligence, and losing it, going back to a square one that is not the same, knowing that once upon a time he was a man with genius intellect, but having to live with the loss of that; and finally, it showed change through the humanization of Charlie, making the reader sympathize with his situation, and advocating change in the treatment of people similar to Charlie. The treatment of the mentally ill now is far better than during the late 1950s to 1960s, part of that reason might just be because of "Flowers for Algernon" and its theme, *change*.