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The Innovation of Charles Gordon

Change is very difficult especially when you change who you are. “Flowers For Algernon” is a fictional short story written by Daniel Keyes which main character is Charles Gordon who at 37-years old living in New York around 1965 and given an opportunity to have a life changing surgery to increase his intelligence. Which could change the way science and Charlie think. Charlie the main character in the story that has a low IQ and wants to become, his definition of the word, “smart”. He has to take many test leading to the experiment that could change the way science and Charlie think. What happens throughout the story is what makes up the theme of the story, change. Change over time is used well in “Flowers For Algernon” because in the beginning, middle, and ending Charlie reacts, thinks,writes, and feels different.

 To start off with Charlie would not think like the majority of people think. He would only think in a literal way not like most people who would take the inkblot test . As mentioned in progress report 2, “Then I dont remember so good but he wantid me to say what was in the ink. I didnt see nuthin in the ink but he said there was in picturs there other pepul saw some picturs” this means that Charlie thought literally which after the surgery it would change. How he tried to think and even tried putting on glasses because he was committed to becoming “smart”. In progress report 5 it states, “I got my rabits foot and my lucky penny and my horse show. Only a black cat crossed me when I was comming to the hospitil” Charlie is superstitious with everything that is happening with his surgery. He must me afraid about the surgery or if he ever develop into the “smart” person he wants to grow into. With him thinking literally and being superstitious there is change between what he believes and thinks about himself because of how he might feel about the surgery.

 Secondarily, towards the middle of the story, post surgery, Charlie starts to learn new things about his mind and feelings. April 28 states, “ I knew that she meant about levels because I'd seen some of them already. The thought of leaving her behind made me sad. I’m in love with Miss. Kinnian.” this is where he realizes that he has real feeling for someone. This is one of the first changes the develops over the time following surgery. Half way through the resolution in the story on June 10, “Deterioration progressing. I have become absent-minded. Algernon died two days ago. Dissection shows my predictions were right. His brain had decreased in weight and there was a general smoothing put of cerebral convolutions as well as a deepening and broadening of brain fissures” this Charlie’s big change. Were he had a high vocabulary and he shows, an increase in grammar and discloses what he learned about his experiment even tho he suffers from a mental impediment he still figured out how everything was arranged. This is connected with the theme change because this is a huge change with Charlie’s language, spelling, and grammar.

 In the end Charles Gordon starts off with how he started in the beginning. In Charlie’s words on June 19, “ Last night I couldn’t remember where I lived.” Charlie is starting to forget things that he still remembered before the operation. Before he would not be able to spell words correctly but now he is forgetting simple things. The last paragraph he wrote, “ Its easy to make frends if you let pepul laff at you. Im goign to have lots of frends where I go.” Charlie knows that what happened to Algernon is going to happen to him. Despite that his intelligence is decreasing he is ok with it because he got what he wanted, he got to be “smart”. This is his last change because Charlie got “smart” just like he wanted. Although it was temporarily he still was happy that he got to beat Algernon.

 Over the course of the story a few things change but that it is why it is the theme for “Flowers For Algernon”. Charlie starts off with not being the best human-being at spelling or using the appropriate grammar and mind it different from the rest of the story. AFter the surgery he is impatient and just wants to be “smart”. Towards the middle his vocabulary elevated and he learned how to use puncition. Them at the end he acted worse than he did in the start. Usually change is change and that’s that but with Charles Gordon changed then changed then changed again.