The Main Character's Personality in Daniel Keyes' Flowers for Algernon

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ABSTRACT
Flowers For Algernon, a novel by Daniel Keyes, is one of his most renowned literary works. It had won Nebula and Hugo awards. The story centers on Charlie, a 32-year-old man with a debilitating mindset who undergoes surgery to boost his IQ. The goal of this research is to elucidate the main character's description in Flowers for Algernon. The writer utilized a structural technique to analyze Daniel Keyes' more deeply since this method exposes as precisely, as thoroughly, as precisely, and as deeply as possible the connections and entanglement of all parts and aspects of literary works. The study demonstrates that each human being is born with unique characteristics, abilities, and impairments. Additionally, individuals should embrace who they are and be themselves, even though most of them seek to alter various parts of their lives.

1. Introduction

Literature was formed in two ways: via the use of language as a medium and through the incorporation of art. The author can convey his or her experiences, thoughts, ideas, and insight into social reality through language, while readers can acquire insight into the meaning contained in literary works (Rahman & Rahman, 2020; Indrasari, 2020). Rene Wellek and Austin Warren declared unequivocally in their work "Theory of Literature" that literature is a social institution that uses language as its medium of communication and social construction. As classic literary methods that are intrinsically social, symbolism and meter are standards and convictions that could only have developed in society. (1949, Wellek and Warren, p. 94)

Literature is classified into various genres, including poetry, drama, book, and short story. Now, the author examines a novel as her primary subject in this essay, focusing particularly on the protagonist. A novel is a type of literary work that has components that contribute to the development of the tale itself. They are the story, the characters, the environment, and the theme. These aspects work in tandem to help create the tale (Rahman, 2017; Astiantih, 2018; Tahir, et al., 2020). Characters are vital to a tale because they provide an essential purpose of describing and representing society's circumstances and different unquantifiable difficulties. Every novel has the potential to show some characters in an inventive manner. However, it is heavily influenced by actual reality.

Analyzing a novel's character can be accomplished by examining the attitude that shapes his or her actions (Arniati, et al., 2019). The author then engages the reader's feelings and stimulates their imagination or even interpretation by describing the character. As a result, it may be asserted that character is the primary determinant of a novel's storyline. Daniel Keyes' novel "Flowers for Algernon" is one of his greatest works of literature. Charlie Gordon is introduced as one of the novel's central characters. He is thirty-two years old. To be a normal and intelligent person who does not wish to be abused, and to have the opportunity to love and be loved, are his aspirations. However, because he is a handicapped guy and the surgery enhances his mental capacity, he is eligible to have the treatment. The technique was initially carried out on a mouse named Algernon. Then Charlie becomes the first human subject to undergo IQ enhancement. The Novel is the only novel to have won both the Hugo and Nebula awards and to have sold over five million copies. This study aims to analyze the main character of Charlie Gordon in novel *Flowers for Algernon*. The writer also wants to show the character's feeling, relationship, and dream and motivation.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Defenition of Personality

Personality is the word derived from Latin language namely "persona" which means mask used. It can be defined as; (1) the individual characteristic totality, particularly concerning to other person, and (2) a group of integrated emotional tendency of interests and behavior, and also split personality (Wilcox, 2006: 272). On that case, personality can be interpreted by its actor who acts as the action in the mask. Meanwhile, in drama, the word "persona" shows the quality of the character played. Nowadays, by psychology experts, the word "personality" is used to show something real and describe how and what the real of an individual is.

Furthermore, personality can be an aspect characterized psycho-physic that affects an individual to do and act like he does as an organization or formation or characteristic (Muntigl, 2020). It can also be said as the distinctive character distinguishing an individual among others, such as behavior, confidence, values and ideal, knowledge and skill, variations of the way of gesture, etc. In addition, to adjust to the environment, he needs personality as his characteristic patterns of behavior, thought, and emotion. Therefore, the study that notices the resemblance and differences between individual human beings is the study of personality particularly the psychological characteristics.

There are fundamental similarities in the differentiation of definitions formulated by psychology experts, particularly personality theorists: 1) In general, understanding the meaning of individual differentiation can be defined as personality. The term "personality" means each person has a uniqueness. Through the study, it is hoped that characteristics that distinguish individual among other become clear or easy to understand. Therefore, something unique or special in each individual can be said as a personality based on the theorists of personality point of view; 2) Commonly, personality is defined as two aspects; structure of hypothesis organization as the personality and organized and integrated by personality as behavior. In other words, the term "organization" that becomes a determiner and set of behavior can also be considered personality; 3) In general, the definition of personality is related to the important one to see the personality based on the "historical life" development and perspective. The personality theorist point of view indicates a subject's complicity process or individual for internal and external influence, including biology term, social experience, and environment change. In other word, nature and nerture affect the motif and uniqueness of individual personality. Therefore, personality can be interpreted as a part of soul founding that underlines human existence to be one, inseparable in its functions and understanding; understanding me, self or understanding human.

2.2 Structuralisme Approach

Based on the Autonomy Structuralism or A History of structuralism, Juan Piaget (in Aminuddin, 2008) illustrated that the word "structure" has three main points, namely:

1. Wholeness means that the parts of the structure itself conform to the intrinsic concept, which assigns the structure as a whole and also its parts.

2. Transformation means that structure carries out transformation procedure continuously in producing several new ideas

3. Self-regulation means that structure does not need other elements outside of itself in maintaining the transformation procedure.

Based on the explanation above, it can be assumed that the structural approach allows the text of literary work as unity and wholeness, which rejects the involvement of extrinsic aspects.

3. Method

This method is categorized as descriptive and qualitative and divided into two methods of collecting data: primary and secondary. The preliminary data was gained from the novel, while secondary data were from other sources such as books, articles, and journals. In analyzing the problem through the intrinsic elements of the novel, the researcher used structuralism. This research focused in analyzing the main character's personality "Charlie Gordon". The data also were based on the original source " *Flowers for Algernon*".

4. Findings

Charlie Gordon is the main character in the story. Charlie is a developmentally disabled man. He is 32 years old and has an I.Q. of 68. He has struggled in reaching his goal to be "a smart" man in the whole of his life. Charlie is a dumb

man, he can not read fluently, write words correctly, can not spell very well and has not be able to understand when use full stop and commas. It can be seen from the progres report written by Charlie in the following text :

"Progris riport 1 martch 3.

> Dr Strauss says I should write down what I think and remember and everything that happens to me from now on. I dont no why but he says it is essential so they will see if they can use me. I hope they use me because Miss Kinnian says mabye they can make me smart. I want to be smart. My name is Charlie Gordon I werk in Dormers bakery where Mr Donner gives me 11 dollers a week and bred or cake if I want. I am 32 years old and next munth is my brithday. I tolld dr Strauss and perfesser Nemur I cant rite good, but he says it dont matter he says I shud rite just like I talk and like I rite compushishens in Miss Kinnians class at the Beekman college center for retarted adults where I go to lern 3 times a week on my time off. Dr Strauss says to rite a lot everything I think and everything that happins to me, but I can't think anymor because I have nothing to rite so I will close for today... yrs truly Charlie Gordon".(Keyes,2006 : Flowers For Algernon :1)

From the quotation above, it has assumed that Charlie can not write correctly, he doesn't know to use stops and commas and can not spell very well. There are many error words in his writting such as " *Progris riport 1 martch 3,* where it should be written Progress report 1 march 3, shoud rite down it should be written should write down, remembir and evrey thing should be written remember and every thing and many other words."

In life, Charlie lived alone. He worked in a factory/shop cake namely Donners. The owner was a good friend of his uncle, Uncle Herman, namely Mr.Donner. Charlie has a father (Matt Gordon), mother (Rose Gordon) and little sister (Norma Gordon) with a normal mentality, but Charlie has been removed in his family because his mother and sister do not want family like him, a dumb man. He does not care about his family relationship in the current mental state, which is important to him now. Charlie was employed as a floor cleaner and delivery boy. Charlie always received the crude jokes by the worst of the bakery workers, but he was treated kindly by the others. It can be seen in his progres report :

> "March 21 - We had a lot of fun at the bakery today. Joe Carp said hey look where Charlie had his operashun what did they do Charlie put some brains in. I was going to tell him about me getting smart but I remembered Prof Nemur said no. Then Frank Reilly said what did you do Charlie open a door the hard way. That made me laff. Their my frends and they really like me."(Keyes,2006 : Flowers For Algernon :14)

Based on the quotation above, it showed that in a way with all these people whom he considers "smart", he feels "happy". He enjoys laughing together, even when most of the laughter is against him. At this event, the only things that made him unhappy are the fact that Charlie hardly seems to think anything of his family, which has abandoned him, and also his anxiety in learning and being "smart". The condition prompted him to join in a special class, which he attended after a long day of drudgery at the bakery. Otherwise, as his "world.", he seems to be happy in entertaining and be patronized by the co-workers at the bakery.

Although he is a developmentally disabled man, but charlie have a difference, he has a great desire to learn and he want to read books, he want to being smart. It because his traumatic childhood when his mother always told him to learn hard. Therefore, at night, he does school in Beekman Academy which is destined to peoples like him.

> "I cant rite good but he says it dont matter he says I shud rite just like I talk and like I rite compushishens in Miss Kinnians class at the beekmin collidge center for retarted adults where I go to lern 3 times a week on my time off. "(Keyes,2006 : Flowers For Algernon :1)

According to the sentence above, Charlie is someone who wishes and hopes, he has a great desire to learn, and he enjoys it. As a result of his eagerness to study, his instructor at Beekmen suggested that he undergo a surgical surgery that would enhance his mental powers. He is eventually offered that option and decides to let the physicians to operate on his brain, despite the fact that he is aware that the procedure may fail, as Prof.Nemur said to him:

> "He said Charlie we werked on this for a long time but only on animils like Algernon. We are sure thers no fisical danger for you but there are other things we cant tell untill we try it. I want you to understand this mite fale and then nothing woud happen at all. Or it mite even succeed temperary and leeve you werse off then you are now. Do you understand what that meens. If that happins we will have to send you bak to the Warren state home to live."(Keyes,2006 : Flowers For Algernon :7)

Charlie did not care about the impact of the surgery, he is eager and states that he does not care if the intelligence is temporary. He think he is very strong and always lucky because he has a fortune fetish, he only think to being smart like a normal people as described in the following text :

" I said I dint care because I aint afraid of nothing. Im very strong and I always do good and beside I got my luky rabits foot and I never breakd a mhrir in my life. I droppd some dishis once but that dont count for bad luk."

"I told him thanks doc you wont be sorry for giving me my 2nd chance like Miss Kinnian says. And I 'meen it like I tolld them. After the operashun Im gonna try to be smart. Im gonna try awful hard."(Keyes,2006 : Flowers For Algernon :7)

According to the quote above, Charlie is clearly invested in the enterprise. He is not fearful of anything. In his view, he only aspires to be intelligent like the rest of us. Prior to surgery, a man named Burt Selden administered a "raw shock test" to him. He is a laboratory assistant and a junior member of the surgical team treating Charlie. Charlie investigates several tests and meets Algernon, a white mouse who was the first successful test subject to get enhanced powers. Algernon is able to solve the tough puzzle and defeat Charlie in the test as a result of the operation. Then, following a battery of tests—including a maze-solving battle with Algernon—Charlie has the procedure.

Firstly, he felt disappointed that in his intellect there is no change immediately. However, he gradually improves in his spelling and grammar because of work and help from his teacher, Alice. Then, he starts reading adult books, and slowly filling his brain with many academic resources.

Now, Charlie becomes a genius. He becomes critical to the people arround him particularly the research team, which has treated him as "guineaping'. He does not respect the decisions being made for him, but he is happy with the intellectual powers because of the surgical changes. He also becomes the master a dozen languages, and many subject, such as literature, music, psychology, maths and linguistic,etc. He is smart indeed better than a professor.

5. Conclusion

Charlie Gordon, 32, is a guy who is mentally challenged. He is regarded as a happy individual with a strong drive to study and a desire to be intelligent. It is the result of his difficult upbringing, during which his mother constantly emphasized the need of hard work. As a result, he attends Beekman Academy at night, which is designed for people like him. Prior to undergoing the procedure to boost his IQ, he is a dim-witted 32-year-old guy. People like him, despite the fact that he is often subjected to nasty jokes from his pals. After Charlie undergoes surgery, everything changes. He transforms into a different person: he is capable of falling in love with someone he has never considered before. Now, Charlie is a genius, but his intellect makes him the "other people;" he becomes so smart that he begins to recall his lost childhood memories, particularly those involving his family.

The reality of being a genius is not in accordance to his supposition. Now, he begins to miss lovely times when he is still a dumb man. Ironically, he begins to be ostracized by others arround him and now he must receive that his intellect will not endure. His condition is the same as Algernon, a white mouse which successful through the same procedure before him. Algernon's intelligence begins to weaken and finally perish. Now, he understands that the same thing will happen to him shortly. After studying the structural aspect of Daniel Keyes', Flowers for Algernon, the writer determined that: 1) in novel Flowers for Algernon, distinctive qualities, abilities, and faults are every individual has when he was born first. So, we must embrace who we are and be ourselves; 2) in Flowers for Algernon illustrates that nobody is flawless. Therefore, as human beings, we must respect each other; 3) human people have the capacity to grow and be who they should be. Therefore, Flowers for Algernon seeks to illustrate the primary character's impression and struggle in reaching self-actualization.

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