Charlie Gordon as a posthuman character in
Daniel Keyes's *Flowers for Algernon*

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Abstract

This research explores the posthumanist viewpoint in *Flowers for Algernon by* Daniel keyes through examining the moral and social ramifications of Charlie Gordon's journey from amentally handicapped man to a superman and back again. Drawing on the posthuman theory, this paper investigates how Keyes' depiction of Charlie Gordon's metamorphosis challenges conventional ideas concerning what it means to be a human. It further tackles the assumption that Charlie's growth from an inferior human to a superior one demonstrates how humans are neither permanent nor static. This study contends that the author offers a posthumanist approach that challenges the inherent stability of human nature and creates a space for transhumanism and genetic experimentation. Keyes' *Flowers for Algernon* novel is regarded as a notable work for advancing profound insights into the complexities of ethical and human values and their degradation, as well as a vividly detailed understanding of the intricate tension between emotion and intellect with the interference of science which allows for an expanded awareness of the essence of what constitutes a human being.

Key Words: Intelligence, posthumanism, science, superman, transhumanism

Introduction

The implications of posthumanism for the future of mankind and the human condition have greatly increased in prominence in the past few decades. A philosophical and cultural movement known as posthumanism questions conventional humanist presumptions and ideas, such as the notion that human beings are a unique species with inherent superiority. It challenges the human-centric viewpoint and promotes the elimination of distinctions between people and other living things. The rise of cutting-edge technologies like genetic engineering, artificial intelligence, and biotechnology has made the concept of posthumanism more pertinent than ever before, posing fundamental moral and ethical concerns regarding the fate of mankind. Also, it explores identity, consciousness, and the nature of intelligence in connection to posthumanism using textual analysis and critical theory. Additionally, it looks at how the distinction between humans and non-humans is portrayed and how the novel plays with the lines separating the two categories. At this point, the research question that can be posed is: How does Keyes apply posthuman philosophy to examine the constraints of the human condition?

1. Posthumanism: Beyond Human Limits

Judith M. Halberstam and Ira Livingston claimed that the Posthuman does not represent an evolution or degradation of the human. Instead, it gets involved in redistributing inequalities and identities. They added that the human role is to domesticate and categorize differences within people, whether based on class, gender, or race, as well as between humans and other species. The Posthuman develops in the pattern of resonance and interference between the two (10). In other words, "Posthuman does not signify the decline of the human race. Instead, it engages in the transfer of identities and imbalances, such as the advancement of human capabilities through cutting-edge technology that aids in the eradication of sickness, the development of quality of life and social connectivity, the extension of life expectancy, and so on.

David Roden assumed that the technological inheritor would be an ameliorated or reduced version of us (1). He argued that humans have no idea what will occur in the future since non-Posthumans are unable to determine the way Posthumans perceive the world. The constraints of current knowledge must

influence any ethical or political assessment of a cyborg's future if that future is not inevitably influenced by any kind of subjectivity or morality. Consequently, this can be deemed as testimony to the fact that only a posthumanism that is contemplative can sustain an ethics that is up to the task of addressing the transformational technological potential.

According to Rosi Braidotti, to be a part of nature is a philosophy that is fundamentally constituted and anchored. Posthumanism makes an alliance with the generativeand immanent energy of life in its non-human aspects to bring this materialist understanding and the duty of critical thought into harmony (66). In other words, people are an essential element of nature; inwhich, Posthumanism should be combined with non-human aspects to enhance people's comprehension of the universe.

Unlike Braidotti, R.L. Rutsky's attention is slightly shifted. He concentrated on the transformation of being a Posthuman. Rutsky used the term "mutation" that reverts between internal and external; natural and technical; and between the sovereign issue and other recognized issues (21-22). Furthermore, people are shifting into Posthuman entities, and the term "mutation" is used to characterize the changes that are occurring in people as a result of their interactions with technology and society, both inside and outside. In light of this, Braidotti and Rutsky proposed two distinct perspectives on Posthumanism, one stressing human evolution toward Posthumanism and the other emphasizing cooperation with non- human components.

The post-human, thus, according to such transhumanists, is an evolutionary process that will take place as the human species develops into one that is essentially not human due to theuse of technology. Katherine Hayles, in her book *How We Became Posthuman*, assumed both a Posthuman and a transhuman viewpoint while giving a critique of the cybernetic and informatics literature, particularly focusing on the role technology will play in attaining a perfect integration between humans and machines. Katherine has two points of view. On the one hand, she referred to Posthumanism as a nightmare where people consider their bodies like disposable products that must be improved, refreshed, and changed all the time. On the other hand, it is a dream in which people employ technology wisely. They recognize the advantages and opportunities that technology may offer, although they also see the value of staying in touch with the real world and being aware of its limitations. (Hayels 250). That is to say, in this world, there exist two kinds of people: those who have lost touch with reality

and those who value boundaries and consider technology just a means of achieving endless power and immortality. Others celebrate the complexity of the natural world and embrace the idea that human life is not just about individual achievement but also about being part of a larger community.

Although they can be seen as distinct movements, there are points of intersection between Posthuman and postmodern. Both challenge the traditional understanding of human identity, subjectivity, and agency. Postmodernism deconstructs fixed notions of identity, while Posthumanism expands the boundaries of what it means to be human. They both critique anthropocentrism and question the dominance of human perspectives in various domains.

2. Nietzsche's Philosophy and Posthuman Society

German philosophers have long dominated philosophical idealism. Apart from Plato, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche was regarded as one of the brightest idealists who decried weakness and glorified the struggle for existence. Nietzsche inspired people to search for meaning and truth in their lives through his philosophy, which observes what values mean and how important they are to humankind.

Nietzsche in *The Gay Science* addressed the idea that magic, astrology, and alchemy were the starting points of science (Nietzsche et al. 170). Although magicians, astrologers, and alchemists offered what was supernatural, miraculous, and unusual questions about truth and secrets engendered. This is considered the preliminary stage for people who are qualified to deal with science and technology. The first things science brought along when it first opened its doors were light and peace. Nietzsche perceived that the technological environment around him offered comfort, security, and enjoyment to people because, in the first steps of the emergence of technology and science, only the pros appeared, such as machines, cars, industrial technologies, and all the means that contributed to clearing the way for human life.

Nietzsche suggested that when science is deceitful, it has the potential to be damaging, toxic, and disastrous (200). Nietzsche called on people to look beyond science and technology. By this token, both science and technology deviated from their straight paths where the cores exceeded the pores. At this point, they became both a disease and a cure at the same time; the best proof of this is the modern inventions, namely nuclear weapons, that contributed to many wars and caused massive destruction to humanity, in addition to the medical

aspect that made man undergo multiple changes that went beyond borders, for example, gender-affirming surgeries, plastic surgeries, and other operations that may cause serious complications that may lead inevitably to death.

Friedrich Nietzsche re-examines the conventional philosophical explanation of the birth of logic, informing people that illogic is the seed of logic and that it is established in contradiction or inconsistency: truth started in error (9). He claimed that without committing faults, people would not be able to reach the truth. Nietzsche attempted to confirm that making errors is not a defect but rather the main motive to gain the truth. To illustrate, when a teacher asks his students a difficult question, it is recommended that they try to answer even if they make mistakes rather than giving them the answer effortlessly because when they make a mistake once, they will be careful not to make it again. Thus, the error contributed to the consolidation of the answer in their minds. This confirmed the belief that everything is knownby its opposite: the realization of the blessing of health is known by the taste of illness; the feeling of happiness is known by the existence of sadness; the intelligence feature is known by stupidity... On the whole, contradiction did not always mean enmity; it could be a solution and a way to survive.

By the mid-19th century, the emphasis on the issue of existence was on Nietzsche's need to understand or re-establish his identity as well as what his purpose in life was. Nietzsche proposed a reproduction of the ancient Greek past; he thought about the traits and the way of life of the god Dionysus for the sake of overcoming the internal conflict that afflicted him (Geisler 142). Nietzsche influenced human beings to build their own identities through self- realization rather than relying on anything beyond this life. By shedding light on religion, government, and science, he encouraged humankind to question, doubt, and ask instead of simply receiving.

2.1. The Concept of Power and Dominance

Each person makes a conscious or unconscious decision about a fundamental value that will guide their quest for a good life. Its value may be wealth for some, status, social approval, happiness, love, or knowledge for others. But according to Nietzsche, power is the value we should cherish most highly.

Many people associate the concept of power with the ability to control others and to put them in service of their needs and desires. However, this is not the type of power Nietzsche had in mind. As for him, the desire to control others

is often the manifestation of anunderlying weakness, and the will of the powerless represents some sort of superiority (90). Similarly to the concept introduced by the contemporary philosopher John Richardson, which is known as the enhancement of a skill or activity already given (35), As to say, instead of power as the Machiavellian control of others, the type of power that should be pursued is a power each individual embody, a power in other words that is equivalent to what Nietzsche called growth and expansion (208).

Furthermore, in the book *Nietzsche's Values*, John Richardson elaborated on what, for Nietzsche, is the highest and purest form of power, claiming that the point of his life is his growing or strengthening, which requires changing previous states of himself (435). That is to say, Nietzsche's ultimate conception of reality can be achieved through analyzing his own impulses, desires, and passions. as he believed that people could learn something new about reality by looking into and analyzing themselves.

At times, Nietzsche seems to posit the will to power as more than just a principle that yields insight into the deep psychological motivations of human beings. For instance, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* he has Zarathustra claiming that every living creature he came upon had the drive to power (142), which brings to the reader's attention the question of can animals, plants, or even rocks feel the power?" Presumably, the feeling of power that Nietzsche describes seems to be a human affair and restricted to organisms with a certain degree of intelligence.

The labels good and evil are simply value judgments created by man himself. In *ThusSpoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche proclaimed that a table of values hangs above every great person (76). Hence, the will to power provides a mind-independent, objective constraint on our values, which moves us beyond nihilism, and human systems of good and evil are simply an expression of a stronger underlying will to power. Moreover, Zarathustra remarks that the willto power is a decidedly human phenomenon, and it is primarily concerned with value judgments and ethical systems. For this reason, man exercises his will to power by creating values and systems of good and evil (141). The will to power is one of the fundamental concepts in the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. It is notoriously vague as a concept, as it meant different things at different times throughout Nietzsche's intellectual development, leaving its interpretations open to debate.

2.2. The Concept of Superman in Nietzsche's Philosophy

In 1883, Friedrich Nietzsche wrote his famous book entitled *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* or *Sprach Zarathustra,* in which many of his philosophical ideas were addressed regarding thelink between mankind and morality, such as his concept of the Übermensch. This German term is commonly referred to as the English concept of Superman. Based on the character Zarathustra, Nietzsche was trying to prove that life is divided into three transformations— camel, lion, and baby—that a person must undergo to achieve the autonomy to establish his own goals, particularly to be a superman.

Nietzsche started with the strong-willed load carrier who was forced to carry burdens. He compares humans in the very first stage to camels. The following passage confirms his claim: "To the spirit, there is much that is heavy; to the strong, a carrying spirit imbued with reverence. Its strength demands what is heavy and heaviest." (16) The camel could carry all the happiness, grief, wisdom, and most challenging things that may occur in life. Nonetheless,the trip over the desert is solitary. As soon as the camel realizes that there are no crucial principles or a singular purpose to existence, it becomes necessary to abandon carrying others'loads. Similarly, humans start as camels. They load orders and try to survive despite the extra weight they bear, but they cannot maintain that weight forever. Being a camel is not enoughto manage chores indefinitely and adapt to social norms and standards; instead, they must stand up for themselves and their own goals, free themselves from their load, and establish their meaning. For this reason, the camel transforms into a lion.

To be free and rule the desert, the lion must depose the current ruler, the dragon (quoted in Lihui Liang). The lion's quest for freedom is obstructed by the dragon, and according to Nietzsche, this dragon stands for religion, the government, and the organizations that established the accepted moral standards and principles of society, which dictate how mankind should behave, assign them a mission, and define who they are. The fight between the lion and the dragon shows Nietzsche's rejection of all the principles that religion and government advanced. He argued that each individual who defines his own rules and boundaries in order to achieve his objectives is an "Übermensch" because the superman he viewed was a real person who must attain identity according to his standards.

As a last transformation, the lion metamorphosed into a baby. Nietzsche

identifies the kid as a pure, fresh start and a first motion. (17) Like Superman, the child is free from the constraints imposed by social norms; he is the one who creates his ideals, chooses his fate, and lives in a relaxed state of unrestricted play and creation. Kids explore the meaning of things for themselves without being constrained by rules and standards, just like Superman, who builds his own identity and ideas away from the government. As a result, both Superman and the baby gain their desires and create their own universe.

Ultimately, the "Übermensch" passed through three metamorphoses: being obedient at first, then acting with his ideas and mind away from the system, and building finally his personality and principles.

3. Charlie Gordon as a Posthuman Character

Flowers for Algernon is a story about Charlie Gordon, a man with a learning disability whose life is changed forever when he undergoes an experimental procedure that increases hisintelligence. The novel highlights many post-human concepts that mainly challenge traditional definitions of human nature and identity.

To begin, science is continuing its growth to impact human civilization in ways that could never have been thought of before. Such growth is demonstrated in *Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes when two doctors, Dr. Nemur and Dr. Strauss, perform a surgical operation on their "test subject," Charlie Gordon, to attempt to triple his IQ. This raises questions about the relationship between intelligence and humanity. The protagonist mentioned " Miss Kinnian says maybe they can make me smart. I want to be smart." (Keyes 5), In this passage, he expresses his hope that experimental surgery will increase his intelligence, which calls attention to Posthuman aspects that emphasize the use of technologyto transcend the limitations of the human body and mind.

Therefore, as Charlie's intelligence grows, he discovers that he is part of a larger experiment and must grapple with the implications of his newfound knowledge. As he struggles to come to terms with the changes in his life, Charlie must also confront the reality of what the experiment has done to him. Thus, he stated "How can I make him understand that he did not create me? He makes the same mistake as the others when they look at a feeble-minded person and laugh because they don't understand there are human feelings involved." (Keyes 145), which reflects the transformation of the main character from a mentally disabled man to a highly intelligent one and the rejection of his nature to transform humans

into post-humans. Besides, these changes happen both internally and externally, which is clear throughout Charlie's reports, which show that his happiness decreased because of the doctors who did not follow proper ethical procedures, and at the end of it all, Charlie died.

Moreover, scientists discovered how to make a mouse named Algernon intelligent with experimental surgery before Charlie's one. Algernon is a lab mouse who has undergone surgery to increase his intelligence. Charlie initially meets him at the lab before his surgery and cannot beat him at the mazes that both Algernon and Charlie are forced to complete, he stated " I hate that mouse. He always beets me. Prof Nemur says I got to play those games andI got to take those tests over and over again" (Keyes 18). Following successful surgery, Algernon's intelligence increased. So he is being used by the researchers to predict whether Charlie's surgery will be successful or not. Hence, in Progress Report 6, the protagonist mentioned,

> "I askd Prof Nemur if I coud beet Al- gernon in the race after the operashun and he sayd mabye. If the operashun werks good Ill show that mouse I can be as smart as he is even smarter. Then Ill be abel to reed bet- ter and spell the werds good and know lots of things and be like other pepul. Boy that woud serprise everyone. If the operashun werks and I get smart mabye Ill be abel to find my mom and dad and sister and show them. Boy woud they be serprised to see me smart just like them and my sister." (keyes 12)

This can be seen as a reflection of Posthuman thought and clearly illustrates the role of science and technology as "quick fix" to human problems.

At last, one aspect of Posthumanism is the idea of overcoming physical, intellectual, and emotional limitations through scientific means. Charlie's transformation embodies this concept as he evolves from a mentally disabled individual to a highly intelligent and articulateperson. Through the experimental procedure, Charlie gains access to a level of intellectual capacity that allows him to engage with complex ideas and experience the world in new ways.Hence, relating the story of a mentally impaired man whose intelligence is increased through surgery and then lost, *Flowers for Algernon* touches on Posthuman theory, which is mainly portrayed in the use of science and technology to improve Charlie's intellect. In this case, a surgical procedure can turn a person of subnormal intelligence into a genius. Hence, Charlie's operation is a great

example of creating a post-human. In a reversal of the classic notion of tragedy, the "flaw" that causes Charlie's downfall is not within him but in the technology that sought to change him.

To sum up, *Flowers for Algernon* is a science fiction novel that raises questions about the relationship between intelligence and humanity. The novel highlights many Posthuman concepts, which are portrayed mainly in the plot and the protagonist.

.4. Man Playing God : Science as an Instrument for Superiority

The theme of man playing God is crucial to the plot of *Flowers for Algernon*. Through Charlie's medical process, which initially transforms him into an exceptional intelligent person but eventually results in his decline, the novel explores the effects of manipulating human intelligence and also raises awareness of the risks of attempting to manage or control nature and emphasizes the need of recognizing one's limitations.

In *Flowers for Algernon,* the main characters try to control human intellect by playing God through Charlie's operation. The surgeons, Professor Nemur and Dr. Strauss, think they can enhance human intelligence by artificially raising it. These two transhumanists are a representation of characters who are trying to take the role of God by inventing or constructing a more advanced sophisticated human. The experiment that the surgeons performed on Charlie is a perfect illustration of this theme. In order to prepare for the worst- case situation, he began to imagine what might occur if the experiment had failed and having such thoughts made him furious about himself (Keyes 115-116). Without thinking about the potential implications, the surgeons decide to change Charlie's intellectual ability. As a result, his mind is manipulated throughout their experiment, which ultimately brings his downfall.

Additionally, Dr. Strauss and Professor Nemur make an effort to influence Charlie's feelings and thought process. If Charlie maintains his cognitive ability without suffering any emotional harm, they believe their experiment was successful. They are trying to control and change Charlie's entire mentality, which is a case of man playing God by attempting to suppress his feelings.

Moreover, Charlie starts to doubt the ethics of those acting as God when he realizes that the treatment was carried out on a mouse by the name of Algernon.

He feels like a test subject in a science experiment where nobody is really certain about what will happen to him after the procedure and he dislikes feeling like he is a part of a bigger plan (Keyes 70). Charlie is compelled to think about the experiment's impact on the mouse because it had undergone similar artificial enhancement to him. They had altered Algernon's mental condition, and had caused him immense pain and suffering.

   Furthermore, the protagonist understands that his employees were not being kind to him; they were being harsh. He is embarrassed by the fact that he was made fun of without recognizing it. So, he obtains perspective on his history and present, learning that because of the assumption that he was not going to understand, people frequently used him and were nasty to him for fun. These insights make Charlie more wary of almost everyone in his immediate vicinity. Later on, he notices that he is growing more cunning as he gets smarter; it is the thing that makes his coworkers, who often mistreated him, become under his authorityas a result of his newly discovered intellect. Ironically, he holds his intellectual inferiors in thesame low regard that many others formerly did for him. Consequently, his behavior toward his employees shifts from being kind and trustworthy becoming both distrustful and patronizing which is what demonstrates that he acts as a creator.

   Ultimately, as Charlie develops his intelligence, he starts to lose sight of his humanity.Like he explained in his report in the 11th of August that intelligence without the capacity for affectionate exchange leads to moral and mental collapse, to neurosis, and perhaps even to insanity (Keyes 177). His capacity to emotionally connect with people, including even his new love, Alice Kinnian, is lost. As a result of using his intellect as a crutch, he loses touch with other people. His decline into solitary serves as a caution against man trying to play God because it demonstrates how unbridled brilliance may have a detrimental effect on the human situation.

   To conclude, *Flowers for Algernon* consistently explores the idea of man playing God since it raises a warning about the risks of ignoring moral and ethical problems in the name of scientific progress. The story emphasizes how easily the human mind may be manipulated and what could happen as a result. Additionally, it serves as an important reminder about man's tendency to assume the position of a superior being, thus urging people to exercise restraint and think carefully before acting.

5. The Impact of The Tension Between The Power of Intellect and Emotions on The Protagonist

Charlie Gordon, is a guy who is mentally challenged and is regarded as a happy individual with a strong drive to study and a desire to reach the power of being intelligent. As it is described in Nietzsche's philosophy as an irrational power that exists in every person and can be directed in a variety of directions.

Charlie's main concern in the novel is to improve his intelligence no matter what the cost; this desire portrays Nietzsche's concept of power. As a result, he enrolls in classes at the Beekman Center for Retarded Adults, where he learns to read and write. He stated that he is so happy to learn and that he bought a newspaper to read at home (Keyes 27), which portrays his ambition to improve his intellect. He also meets Miss Kinnian, who recommends Charlie to the team of doctors from the psychology department at Beekman University for experimental surgery. This neurosurgery stimulates Charlie's brain centers and increases his ability to learn, thereby increasing his intelligence. Therefore, all these events portrayed Neitzsche's concept of power, which is mainly the fundamental drive within all living beings to assert their dominance.

> "And he said that meens Im doing something grate for sience and Ill be famus and my name will go down in the books. I dont care so much about beeing famus. I just want to be smart like other pepul so I can have lots of frends who like me" (Keyes 12-13)

As time passes, Charlie is able to reconstruct his life from many recovered memories, and he experiences many new things. Therefore, the experiment's outcome was never certain; ironically, it is Charlie, with his increased intelligence, who is able to predict its outcome. His mental regression is quick and painful for himself and everyone who knows him. He perhaps regresses to less than his original state but seems to retain occasional flashes of what his evolved life had been.

As Charlie gains intelligence, he begins to understand that he has been used as a lab animal and a test subject by Dr. Nemur and Dr. Strauss. Therefore, his well-being is less important to the scientists conducting the experiment on him than the experiment itself. Charlie stated that those who use others are stupid, but those who are used are even more stupid (Keyes 269). As Charlie Gordon's intelligence increases, he recognizes the implications of being compared to Algernon. He realizes that a mouse defeating him indicated that the mouse had more intelligence.

Thus, in Progress Report 8 he mentioned " I never new before that I was dumber than a mouse " (Keyes 20). All in all, Charlie's power of intelligence is his downfall. With the loss of his job, losing the only friends he had after realizing that they were not actually friends but rather used his as a source of entertainment, and the awareness that he will lose his intelligence, he becomes depressed and isolates himself from the world, as it is mentioned in the following passage, "Evry body feels sorry at the factery and I dont want that eather so Im going some place where nobody knows that Charlie Gordon was once a genus and now he cant reed a book or rite good" (Keyes 210). Moreover, Charlie stated that people will have more issues as their intelligence increases (Keyes 47). Hence, this reality raises the questionof the importance of intelligence and being happy.

Besides, although he might not have been smart, Charlie was the definition of happiness. He worked happily as a janitor, and he was motivated to learn, and had a great time with his friends. After Charlie undergoes an experiment that makes him smarter, his life changesfor the worse. But Charlie's little intelligence doesn't affect his feelings, emotions, or perceptions. For example, his feelings are not really affected by the other men teasing him about his low ability because his perception is that they are being friendly and not mean, but later on he realizes that his so-called friends were just using him to entertain their humor; he stated that he thought they'd be happy for him achieving his lifelong goal and added that they are supposed to be his friends (Keyes 264), which explains the fact that he was happy and blind to his low intelligence. Moreover, he was also fired from the job because his new intelligence made those around him feel inferior and scared, which sent him into a short depression.

In addition, the reality of being a genius is not in accordance with Charlie's supposition. As the story progresses, he begins to miss the lovely times when he was still a dumb man. Ironically, he begins to be ostracized by others around him, and now he must accept that his intellect will not endure. His condition is the same as that of Algernon, a white mouse who successfully underwent the same procedure as him. Charlie mentioned "Just leaveme alone. I'm not myself. I'm falling apart, and I don't want you here." (Keyes 300). Hence, the writer in *Flowers for Algernon* determined that distinctive qualities, abilities, and faults are things every individual has when he is born. Therefore, this novel seeks to illustrate the primary character's impression and struggle to reach self-actualization. That is to say, Charlie's life was better before the experiment.

Hence, Keyes is saying throughout the story that happiness is more valuable than the power of intellect.

At last, Charlie becomes a genius; he has reached the power he always wanted. Hence,his intellect recalls his lost childhood memories, which makes him a miserable person.

5.1. Intelligence and Human Values

The connection between intelligence and happiness is drawn in the novel *Flowers for Algernon*, since the mentally handicapped man, Charlie Gordon, starts to question the conventional idea of brilliance as his IQ keeps rising and he starts looking for real pleasure. Keyes makes it very evident through Charlie's successes and setbacks that his quick rise in intelligence was not accompanied by general contentment.

In the first place, Charlie's awareness of the fact that intelligence is not the same thing as pleasure is the first step on his path to happiness. Charlie believes early on in the novel that his low IQ is the one factor contributing to all of his troubles. Daniel.M Hybron, in the abstract of his article, mentions a very significant quote from Hemingway which says, "Happiness in intelligent people is the rarest thing I know" (qtd in. Haybron). The more cleverCharlie grows, though, the more he understands that intelligence is not a guarantee of contentment, as he declared that he has always been content without being a genius, therefore he doesn't want to be one (Keyes 171-172). He observes that his extremely clever coworkers are not much happier than he was before the operation.

Meanwhile, Charlie also comes to the key conclusion that genuine happiness is derived from meaningful connections. He didn't have any meaningful friends before the operation, so he turned to his job for comfort. However, as Charlie gains knowledge, he begins to desire deep relationships with other people. The protagonist has a close friendship with Alice, his instructor, and falls in love with her, "I realize now that my feeling for Alice had been moving backward against the current of my learning, from worship, to love, to fondness, to a feeling of gratitude and responsibility" (Keyes 93). These connections give hima sense of fulfillment and purpose that he has never known before. Another crucial turning point in Charlie's happy journey occurs when he discovers that, against gender stereotypes, he carries on his mother's intelligence. Charlie understands from this insight that everyone possesses potential and that

intelligence may not be precisely assessed or defined using conventional criteria. As a result, he begins to question the prejudices and cultural standards that he used to take for granted.

In addition, Charlie realizes that pursuing happiness through materialistic items is pointless and futile. He yearned before the operation for all of what he believed brainpower might provide, including fortune, authority, and prestige. Charlie, on the other hand, recognizes that he doesn't require worldly stuff to be happy merely because he has attained that level of knowledge. He has come to realize that brilliance alone is worth absolutely nothing; the source of happiness is somewhere else. Perhaps it's love, independence, or a sense of achievement (Keyes 184-187). He still finds the simplest things in life to be the most enjoyable, even with his newly discovered mind.

Furthermore, Charlie also discovers the need to forgive others in order to find happiness. He had previously suffered from how his relatives and coworkers had treated him, yet as he becomes more intelligent, he comes to learn to forgive them. Besides, Charlie offers forgiveness to a former coworker who apologizes to him, realizing in this instance that doing so directly results in his sense of fulfillment. He finally comes to the realization that human existence encompasses more than just accomplishments and achievements; he is not sure which is worse: not knowing who he is and being content, or becoming who he has always aspired to be and feeling isolated (Keyes 199). Although Charlie had always wanted to be known for his brilliance, he now realizes that his kindness and service to others will be his enduring legacy. He is therefore satisfied that he has had a constructive influence on the worldat the end of his path to happiness.

Overall, Daniel Keyes, through this novel, demonstrates that achieving a specific level of intelligence or accumulating material goods are not prerequisites for happiness. Instead, having fulfilling connections, loving oneself, making a beneficial impact on the world, and being present in the moment constitute real pleasure.

6. Conclusion

In light of *Flowers for Algernon's* examination of the ways in which science and technology might change human situations, it could potentially be classified as a Posthuman work. The novel is a potent critique of how society views intelligence, physical attractiveness,and mental and physical competence, challenging the beliefs we hold in an accepted human standard. Through Charlie's

journey from feeling alone due to his mental retardation to being exalted and then rejected due to his greater brilliance, the socially created ranking of intelligence is deconstructed. Through this study, the novel addresses crucial issues about the ethical and moral consequences of Posthumanism, including the propriety of performing medical tests on people and animals in an effort to enhance their cognitive and intellectual abilities, besides, it encourages readers to reflect on the complex relationships betweenhumans, technology, and moral values.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest

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