

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the narrative techniques of *Flowers for Algernon* I will now draw the conclusion. As I have stated in the beginning, Keyes wants to convey his idea that being smart does not guarantee one's happiness. I argue that the narrative technique is effectively used to deliver his idea.

First, the first person point of view is very effective for the readers to get close to the narrator. The "I" technique shows at the beginning of the novel when the narrator is set for an experimental operation to become smart. He is given a chance to improve his intelligence because he wants to know and talk about things like normal people. From the first person point of view, the readers know that the narrator is simple minded when he is interpreting and lauding intelligence. Moreover, the reason why the narrator wants to be smart is because his mother is always expecting and pressing him to be smart although she knows the narrator's limits of learning. As an intellectually-disabled person, the narrator is naïve and ignorant towards his surrounding. His ignorance is somehow a bliss because even though his co-workers bully him, the narrator does not feel offended and still thinks that they are his dear friends. Then, the "I" continues to tell the story as the

narrator's intelligence is improving after the surgery. However, he feels unhappy because through a series of unpleasant experience, he becomes aware of his surrounding and that his co-workers actually bully him. He gradually realizes that his co-workers are treating him arbitrarily. Another unpleasant experience he faces is when people around him start to keep a distance from him. The reason is because they are scared of the narrator who suddenly becomes smart and it makes them feel inferior. This event can cause him to get fired from his job at a bakery. Then, Charlie quotes what Alice Kinnian says about how she feels towards him with the change of his personalities. Through what Charlie quotes, the readers know that she does not want to get close with him because the narrator has changed into an arrogant person. Thus, it informs the readers that Alice Kinnian is unhappy with his change of personality. Another unpleasant issue he faces is when Nemur says at the conference that before the surgery, the narrator does not exist. The narrator feels furious and he realizes that he is just a guinea pig like Algernon the mouse. Through the use of the first person point of view, the readers will feel sympathetic towards the narrator. The distance between the readers and the narrator is also close even though after the surgery the reader may feel distant from him because he often talks about knowledge and references that the readers may not be familiar with.

The use of time and tempo is also effective. *Flowers for Algernon* is told chronologically with some flashbacks addition. The flashbacks inform the readers about the narrator's past life and they appear only when the narrator's intelligence is improving. The flashbacks reveal about the narrator's and his mother's problematic relationship, in which his mother prefers to love her sister more and forces him to be 'normal' like everyone else. Another flashback reveals that the

narrator actually has a terrible childhood. His friend teases him through the inappropriate valentine letter he writes on behalf of the narrator. It turns out that remembering his past life when his intelligence is improving only causes him to feel sad. Thus, the flashback helps the readers understand more about the narrator and feel sympathetic toward the narrator as well.

The tempo of *Flowers for Algernon* is a combination of both slow and fast. It can be considered slow because it takes the narrator to write about something important in seven to ten pages. For example when the narrator confronts Nemur to tell him that he is nothing but a guinea pig and when the narrator comes to visit his sister and mother. The slow tempo helps the readers understand about important events that the narrator explains in a detailed way. The function of fast tempo or time skips is to show the readers that the narrator is busy catching up and gaining knowledge by reading books since there are so many things that he needs to learn. Therefore, through slow tempo the readers are able to know in detailed the reason why Charlie is unhappy.

Next, the author uses a unique style of language. It can be seen from the spelling, punctuation and grammatical error as well as the choice of simple diction while the narrator is still an intellectually-disabled person, to the perfect spelling with punctuations and advance diction when the narrator becomes a genius, then back to the way he used to write. The scientific terms such as Rorschach Test and psychological terms are used to help the readers feel a realistic atmosphere regarding its genre—science fiction—and make the story, as well as the narrator as a character become more believable to the readers. Thus, through the phases of how Charlie writes his journal, the readers will know that Charlie is happy when it comes

to the phase of spelling, punctuation and grammatical error. Whereas in the phase of perfect spelling, perfect punctuation and perfect grammar Charlie is unhappy.

Lastly, affected by most of the elements, the distance between the readers and the narrator in this novel is close. The closeness is built from the use of the first person point of view, time and tempo, and the style of language. Also, the close distance helps the readers to grasp the author's idea about the correlation between intelligence and happiness.

In conclusion, the analysis of the narrative technique shows that the narrator feels unhappy as a smart person. All the element of narrative technique is effective in making readers close to the narrator and understand the author's idea better. I argued that the author has successfully delivered his idea about being smart does not guarantee one's happiness through the elements of the narrative technique.

