

Discuss the characterization of Victor Stein, a researcher, on A.I. (Artificial Intelligence) who is interacting with Ry, a transgender doctor. Mind you take into account how the male character comes to life and compare it to Ry.

I have never had a lasting relationship. Have you? –The exchange opens the whole argumentation mainly, through dialogue. The interaction sounds sharp and the tone of communication does not seem to refer an easy going relationship. Indeed, dialogue exchanges are short and vivid. Victor Stein immediately provides a judgement about them both. All that sounds relevant because it indirectly tells the reader they suggest a kind of people different from the ordinary ones. They are “*freaks*” that is abnormal, strange and odd creatures.

It follows that it is through the curiosity and perception of what he and Ry may look like that Victor first comes to life.

He confesses he has never had a lasting relation and is curious about Ry.

At the same time he feels they are freaks thus showing his perception. There is an indirect comparison between “us and them” where us stands for freaks and them refers to the common people.

Confession and curiosity are therefore the first two features the narrator exploits to make Victor come to life in a short, sharp language. The conversation also generates in a far distant spot: *in the empty echo of the sound proof stripped-out hell*.

Telling goes on thanks to a first person narrator that may partly affect the reader's position in trying to conjure up a personal idea of Victor. The same name seems to hint at someone who wants to have the last word in any argument, discussion or conversation.

But, a careful reading unveils the choice of a first person narrator (a transgender who is not pleased to have been referred to as a freak) seem to play a relevant position in the reader's final decision about his possibility to develop an autonomous idea about Victor's characterisation, which is therefore the result of a mixture between telling and showing.

Victor is seen from a transgender's point of view that does not seem to appreciate Victor's strokes and indeed she “pulls (him) away”.

The tone of the conversation is cutting because Victor wants to make himself understood properly. He believes there has been a misunderstanding and wants to underline the idea people have of both: Ry and he included.

The expression “*the behaviour of the world*” creates a blurred identity because here the word *world* recalls the idea of an unidentified mass of people who, to say it in C. Dickens's words, are “*all like one another*” while what Victor wants to bring to the forefront is their peculiar way of thinking: one that condemns limits and hints at a totally different vision of the world and people. In a scientific micro-language use Victor explains, they are re-present an “*anti evolutionary position*” since they are “*lovers*” while “*homo sapiens needed the group*”.

They would be “*different people*”. The conclusion is put into a relevant focus by the conclusion “*that's all*” as if there were nothing to add to his argumentation. However, like Robyn in D. Lodge's work, he has always something more to say. Once and again he repeats, “*he has never had a lasting relationship*” and “*that does not mean I cannot love*”. He sounds very skilled, speaks straightforward; his speech recalls epigraphs and commonly accepted truths, despite how “*different*” and “*unconventional*” they may sound.

The word love is in key position and concludes the argumentation thus focusing on the word “*love*” because it represents a new lead in to Ry's argumentation. Of course, the transgender has a different opinion; otherwise, there would be no dialogue from the scientific point of view.

M. Whitney Houston's refrain "*and I will always love you Rye*" seems to reassure Victor she will love him even when they part. She/he will not hate him, as it is in the style of common people when they separate. However, Victor's immediate reaction is that mutual or personal hate towards a partner represents a conventional style of behavior. He speaks about "*other ways*". The point he wants to make is that if they cannot "*keep this love*" which is also "*that love*" he thinks there is a personal place in him that will be changed by their love. The message here is that LOVE CHANGES PEOPLE. The real point made here is expressed in words displaying high register like "*I will honour it*", "*A private place of worship*" and he adds that even in ordinary activities that place will be given new life by his recollections (memoria, capacità di ricordare).

Indeed, even Roland Barthes speaks of "that place" as our "*sacred history*" in his "*Frammenti Di Un Discorso Amoroso*". Interesting is to add that Roland Barthes's work is about the language of they who are in love more than an essay about a love story.

Victor sounds convincingly sure of his ideas and his use of language is itself certainly not a declaration of intentions but rather a fully involved love expression. There is a moving atmosphere surrounding his words that strike Rye without any doubt. He/she immediately asks him why he is speaking "*like that*" referring to such a touching tone of his. The researcher answer his speech is due to her very close departure. Ry comments his response is a defensive tactics/strategy to control or contain pain. S/he seems to mean love works as a painkiller. S/he knows that perfectly since, between brackets, she thinks s/he is doing the same thus hinting at the idea that love pain does not change with gender difference. The dialogue proceeds with a tone that seems to admit no response or reply.

Victor says he "*suffers*" when he must suffer and that is how the world goes. "*So be it*" is a further epigrammatic example of his acceptance of the nature of love.

Ry asks him if love has to be so complicated and again he seems to have no doubts "*LOVE IS NOT SIMPLE AT ALL*": it upsets any kind of equation since in Victor's words it engages one's whole being and one's own world. No one can afford thinking that he or she is living in a simple world or with truths: *those days are gone*: the ones of certainty and the idea of one single truth is part of past time. Victor's conclusion sounds fascinating and frightening at the same time. Love is not "*pristine*", that is pure and uncontaminated. He is convinced it is a disturbing experience for "*the disturbed*".

Again the character comes to life through his firm convictions expressed in a language typical of a researcher, a Postmodern Frankenstein whose real name is Frankenstein: a strategy that relying on Postmodern irony, recalls the novel is a love story as the sub-title makes clear.

Like M. Shelley's Romantic Frankenstein he is moved by curiosities that push him towards the exploration of new realities in opposition to all that the conventional "world" gives for granted.

He classifies human beings in the guise of a researcher: he knows their needs; they are "group animals" and so are the institutions that represent them significantly. In line with M. Shelly's Victor Frankenstein he shifts Ry's attention on the human beings' management of illnesses in hospitals which are once more "*group institution[s]*" trying to have people regain their life and escape death.

It goes without saying / There is no doubt one of the strategies and more effective narrative strategy is Victor's use of argumentation and dialogue as the most suitable instrument of debate. Scientific hints, clues and references help the reader perceive the character as an outstanding one, a "*loner*".

Solitude is the passepartout to imagination, the key that provides the vision that can overcome what simply meets the eye, in view of new adventures that may develop further aspects of a still mysterious nature, the human being's one included.

In addition to Victor's loud "lesson" about the sociable needs of the human kind, (expressed in his very words and therefore with the technique of showing) there is now a shift to a first person narration that offers the reader Victor's body language seen from Ry's point of view.

It is thus clear that Victor comes to surface also through Ry's point of view that many times recalls Mary Shelley's one as well. Ry is attracted to the researcher and finds his posture attractive thanks to his touch since "*I can't see him*" and therefore Ry can only visually imagine him.

Touch becomes the relevant means of communication, the one of sexual intercourse *par excellence*. The word "*always*" in the middle of the sentence makes the reader perceive the attraction and the chemistry between the two protagonists. Here, interpersonal chemistry acquires a double meaning like a monstrous Shelleyan artifact able to create fear and pleasure at the same time. It is the very nature of human falling in love.

The idea of Arizona and its desert creates a suitable comparison and contrast with the empty echo of *the outstripped hall* Ry and Victor find themselves.

Victor goes on questioning Ry. He wants to know her opinion about the discussion he has been developing so far about the "*group nature of Homo sapiens*" and his/her needs. Indeed, they have also been translated in the more common and familiar institutions like marriages, families and the like. Would their lives be more interesting if they had followed the social mainstream? Such questions result into an interesting debate that seems to connect anthropology to philosophy: the typical questioning and communicative form of philosophical debate. Victor does not wait for Ry's answer. He is convinced that in such case they would simply be no wiser, saner or happier and exactly "*a disturbing experience*" for "*the disturbed*".

Coming now to a conclusion about Victor's characterisation, an intelligent reader will understand he comes to life mainly through his way of thinking expressed through his scientific register, a natural one that displaces common people's experiences and his curiosity that laid the foundation of his love for research and reveals his strong convictions. He reaches the reader mainly through his interaction with Ry and her point of view, the one of a love that is physically and mentally attracted by a man who has an unconventional culture and perspective of the world that of love included. His proper name is a symbolic statement that Victory may be reached once you strongly believe in your visions. Therefore you can win and be victorious in your search for new discoveries and adventures either scientific or of a human loving nature. Love is indeed a means of change, transformation and gives you the courage and strength to go beyond boundaries be they scientific or passionate.

Victor's identities are multiple as probably are all his love stories, the ones he brings together with his plural selves. He declares he will recall and never regret all his love stories. As for Ry, in the extract she seems to have been concerned as an artifact to let Victor's Postmodern ideas better come to surface. Ry's perspective is the one of a transgender human who is in love with a man both disturbed and disturbing her.

S/He is different from him who is really able to struggle with the unknown and that is why/he is both attracted and frightened by him, despite his being an homosexual.

Victor is the mysterious entity a fascinating and intriguing being and the creator of never-ending quests. He reminds those classical heroes who like Prometheus can justly be classified as searchers of new worlds.

Despite his homosexual that may somehow marginalise him from ordinary people he shows the quality of he who dares go beyond his sexual and passionate limits as well as all that is given for granted and commonly accepted.

Sex-reflexivity and self-reflexivity, together with the use of irony and parody and the ability to always question whatever truth make of Victor, a Postmodern researcher of an Artificial Intelligence challenging any biological and human limit to re-affirm an to research the pluralities of mankind's boundaries and means of expression.