Chapter III

The Portraiture of Women in Asimovian Robotics.

The feminist movement is a revolt against the system of patriarchy and its inhuman ways of treating the female. Sheila Rowbotham's *Women in Movement* (1992)\textsuperscript{154} defines feminism as a proposal for social transformation as well as a movement that strives to end the oppression of women. In general, the history of the human race depicts the domination of the male over the female. But the women's movement mainly aims at bridging the gap between the male and female order. Ruthven's *Feminist Literary Studies: An Introduction* (1984) marks the central hypothesis that "gender is a crucial determinant in the production, circulation and consumption of literary discourses [...]"\textsuperscript{155} The work distinguishes between biologically given sex and socially constructed gender. Feminist criticism invariably focuses on the invisible component of 'gender' in all its discourses. Gender is a human invention like language, kinship, religion, and technology. Women and men are different but not unequal. In this regard, Ruthven points out, "It is not a question of deciding what a woman 'is' by nature, but of examining what she is assumed to be in the society, or culture in which she lives, how those assumptions came about, and whose interests they serve."\textsuperscript{156}

The word 'feminist' was first coined by a French socialist Charles Fourier in the nineteenth century. But much earlier Mary Wollstonecraft's
*A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) has voiced the aspiration and goals of the women's movement. Though second wave Feminism began in the 1960s, it gathered momentum with the publication of Kate Millet's dissertation *Sexual Politics* (1970)\(^{157}\).

Among the prominent arguments presented by feminists are the facts that as a group, men own most of the private property, monopolise the better jobs, and sit in the legislatures. The outcome of this inequality is men's double exploitation of women in the job market and in the house. The 'triple jeopardy' of women of colour with 'other' sexual preferences could also be considered here. Therefore, Rowbotham remarks, "Instead of presenting women as an abstract category, it is better to see 'women' as 'people', who within particular historical situations are continually making choices about how they see and align themselves."\(^{158}\)

Highlighting the crux of the problem Rowbotham also states that women receive less than one-tenth of the world income, but do two-thirds of the worlds' work. Although earning less than men, they work longer hours: 2-3 hours more than men in developed countries, 5-6 hours in Latin America and the Caribbean, and as much as 12-13 hours in Africa and Asia per week. When housework and childcare are taken into account, women on an average, have 60-70 hours of work in a week. Often a woman is viewed either as a mistress, a nurse, or a wife. In such a situation, women migrate from one kind of
dependency to the other without ever exercising their autonomy. The movement aims to end subordination and oppression in an androcentric society where women are expected to be submissive.

In the history of mainstream literature, the novel *Pamela* projects the exploitation of Pamela, the maidservant. At the other end, particularly in the contemporary popular 'Mills and Boon' & 'Silhouette' series, the female characters remain subordinate to the protagonists who often exhibit unreasonable anger towards them. Exploitation of women still continues to be a basic theme in the popular form of literature. The pioneer SF work *Frankenstein* (1818) by Mary Shelley raises questions to the effect what would happen to the world if women stop the process of reproduction of the human species. Mary Thornburg's *The Monster in the Mirror: Gender and the Sentimental / Gothic Myth in Frankenstein* (1987) is another classic criticism which has highlighted the effective representation of male oppression in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Therefore, for feminist SF criticism, gender has served either as an issue or a tool.

Phyllis J. Day's "Earthmother/Witchmother" (1982) projects two perspectives to find the 'Woman's place' in Science fiction. One of the methods of study is to focus on the works of the women authors and the other
to study the portraiture of women characters in the genre. In this regard, Annis Pratt’s *Archetypal Patterns in Women’s Fiction* (1981) observes that in the genre of SF, women authors are sometimes able to project visions of worlds where males dare not be female, transcending the gender limitations characterizing more conventional novels. During the past ten or fifteen years a number of women authors of SF have begun to create narrative patterns in which a hero completes a full-fledged romance quest. Ursula Le Guin who began publishing short fiction in such magazines as *Fantastic* and *Amazing* in the 1960’s, conceives SF as a ‘way of seeing’ better possibilities for gender equality, ‘a view into worlds’ in which the imagination can build social structures of its choosing. Pratt’s work cites Le Guin’s “Is Gender Necessary?” which highlights the fact that one of the essential functions of SF, is found in “[...] the reversal of an habitual way of thinking, metaphors for what our language has no words as yet, experiments in imagination.” Further Pratt points out:

In the *Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), for example, she creates a society of ambisexual individuals who enter ‘kremer’ periodically, becoming male or female for sexual purposes only. Their gender may alter in successive cycles, and for the rest of the time they are androgynous [...].
A dynamic viewpoint is thus adopted with regard to sexual identity. Such an approach is evident in the writing of authors like Ursula Le Guin as in *Planet of Exile* (1966); Joanna Russ as in *The Female Man* (1975); Anne McCaffrey as in *Dragon Flight* and James Tiptree as in *Warm Worlds and Otherwise* (1975).

The latest trend in SF writing is to consider unisexuality. Unisexuality is further promoted in cyberspace where there is no gender bias. Interacting via computer and meeting in cyberspace is the order of the day. Furthermore, the ongoing theory 'Cyborg Feminism' defines a cyborg as a symbiotic being resulting from an interface between cybernetics and the organic. The concept has provided for multiple perspectives and the reinvention of positioning. *The Female Man* (1975) by Joanna Russ forms the base for this kind of a movement.

As mentioned earlier, Phyllis J. Day's alternative strategy to deal with 'women's place' in SF is to study women's characters as they are sketched in genre. There has been a drastic change in the perception of women characters in SF since 1960. Accordingly, women are no longer viewed as cardboard stereotypes - the sex object, the temptress, or as the 'lady in distress': Instead, "The new women of Science fiction, [...] whether Witchmother or Earthmother, are real people, strong people, and they are integral to and often protectresses of Earth and Ecology." In other words, women are treated as
an organic part of the society. An attempt is therefore made here to study the women characters in Asimovian robotics rather than to focus on the women authors.

Asimov has sketched the character of a variety of women in his robotistic works. Asimov had begun writing robotistic stories in 1939 itself. In his first robotic story "Robbie" he had focused on the female characters of Mrs. Weston and Gloria. In a span of five decades which Asimov has devoted to write Robotistic works, one could trace a gradual development in the characterisation of women from "Robbie" (1940) to *Robots and Empire* (1985). Asimov has created major women characters like Dr. Susan Calvin, Gladia Solaria, Vasilia, Jessie, Lavinia Demachek, Quintana and many more minor characters in his works. Asimov's female characters vary in age from eight years to two hundred thirty three years. Their social status varies from that of housewives to that of Galaxy leaders. Women like Susan, Vasilia, Demachek, and Quintana are highly educated and well placed in the society. At the same time Asimov has also created certain ignorant and also robophobic women in his fictional works. Though there are a variety of women characters, generally, most of them belong to higher circles of the society. There are two classic legendary women characters in these robotic works, namely, Dr. Susan Calvin and Gladia Solaria. It seems that the former is intellectually mature and the latter progresses from emotional to intellectual attainment. If Susan
appears as a central character in the stories, Gladia becomes a major protagonist in the later novels. The following subsections attempt an analysis of their characters.


Susan Calvin earns her Ph.D., in Cybernetics and joins the United States Robots (USR) as a robopsychologist. She joins the institute when there is a severe financial crunch. The robots produced then are also clumsy and crude. The USR is looking for a terrestrial market for the sale of these robots. Hence, Susan faces the challenging task of expanding the company's business by improving the quality of robots. In the introduction to *I, Robot* (1950) where she is first presented to us, Asimov describes Susan as "a frosty girl, plain and colourless, who protected herself against a world she disliked by a mask-like expression and a hypertrophy of intellect." As she herself says to an interviewer, "Well, I've been called a robot myself. Surely, they've [the company men] told you I'm not human." If the majority of the stories in *I, Robot* (1950) describe the adventures of the team Donovan and Powell, as an exception "Little Lost Robot" (1947) sketches the marvelous classic character of "an awful stretch of imagination" exhibited by Susan. For the first time Susan visits the Hyperbase. The Base needs her expertise in solving the problem of detecting a lost robot. Out of the
sixty-four robots shipped, one was found missing during transit and surprisingly sixty-four robots were found intact on arrival. In point of fact, they are identical in their make and it is difficult to locate the one lost in transit. Further enquiries reveal that the First Law was modified in the robot. Hence, Susan had the challenging task of finding the 'little lost robot'.

In the process of detection she interviews all the robots one by one to no avail. The interview lasts for "five hours of multi-repetition; of replacement after replacement of identical robot; of questions A, B, C, D; and answers A, B, C, D;"\(^{168}\) Later, Drs. Bogert and Susan interviewed the physicist Black who was put in charge of the robots during transit. They instruct him to narrate what had actually happened since he had seen the lost robot. Black explains without inhibition that he had not received any mail from his home since a month. As a result of his utter desperate mental state, he confessed that he had ordered the lost robot 'to go away'. Susan with her years of experience as a robopsychologist insists that he should repeat the exact words of his command but Black failed to recall the same. However, Susan finds out that Nestor 10 was given an order, 'to go and lose yourself'. The command that the young man had given was with verbal appearance of 'revulsion, disdain, and disgust'. Therefore, Susan concludes that though robots must follow the orders given by human beings, subconsciously, there would be a sort of resentment. Susan analyses, "In human beings, voluntary action is much slower than reflex
action. But that's not the case with robots; with them it is merely a question of freedom of choice, otherwise the speeds of free and forced action are much the same.**169

She exhibits her clear knowledge of the robotic mind by pointing out, "The only way we can catch him is to outsmart him-and within his limitations, he can think much more quickly than a human being." Spontaneously, she recollects that the technicians had taught them all about the know-how of the etheric physics. The thought was immediately put into practice in order to distinguish the lost robot from others. She personally takes the calculated risk of exposing herself to Gamma radiation voluntarily on the chance that the 'lost robot' would be forced to protect her and throws a challenge to the robot world to solve the problem. She had speculated that the force of the third law was greater than the impact of the first law in case of Nestor 10. The 'ego machine' has an unconscious drive for its own preservation than protecting human beings.

Step by step, Nester 10 advances in hesitation that it might disobey the earlier order. Shrewd guesswork and appropriate voice modulations brings her success. The experiment reveals the feeling of superiority of the robot. Further, she had arranged to use infrared rays in place of Gamma radiation. Only Nestor 10 could detect that the people were lying. The strength of its feelings of superiority turns out to be its greatest weakness. If something had
happened to Susan in the process of experimentation, it would have been instantaneous death. But, she is successful in resolving the assigned problem.

Thus "Little Lost Robot", centres on the robot's feeling of superiority, the flaw in the interpretation of the First Law, and exhibition of the excellent talent of Susan. At the beginning of the story the superiors particularly the male executives had expressed their doubts about her success. But Susan successfully resolved what they could not solve. Thus, she was rationalistic and courageous to complete the assignment. Further, the story highlights her devotion to duty and strong determination in solving a problem even at the cost of her life.

Also, the story brings out a resolution that robots follow only the literal meaning of the command 'go and lose yourself’. Similar to this kind of a command, in *The Naked Sun* (1957) Asimov uses the same technique when the protagonist Elijah Baley asks a robot to 'give him a hand'. The robot had comprehended the literal meaning, without understanding the extended meaning.

Susan appears once again in another short story by Asimov entitled "Lenny" (1957), which was later collected in *Robot Visions* (1990). Her physical appearance is described in terms of her iron-grey hair, a cold face
with strong vertical lines marked off by a horizontal gash as the pale, thin-lipped mouth. Bogert the mathematician and Director Alfred Lanning while chatting use vulgar expressions to describe her appearance. If the former denigrates her as a 'woman', the latter utters, "I wouldn't ever apply the adjective 'feminine' to any part of her." In spite of the apparent lack of humanity, she saves millions of dollars for the company through her intelligence and optimal maintenance of robots. She has never ever exhibited any interest in human company. She is duty conscious. Her life is spent with distorted and problematic robots. But she is fully satisfied with a handsome salary, the excitement, thrill and novelty of solving robotic problems. In "Lenny" Susan deals with a human problem rather than robot neurosis.

The LNE model of robots is meant to mine Boron in the asteroid belt. When such a robot named Lenny is in the assembly line, a technician does not deactivate the keyboard with almost criminal negligence. While Lenny is still under the metallic raw state, some school children on tour pay a visit to the USR. Out of curiosity, a sixteen-year boy Mortimer W. Jacobson keys in randomly on the keyboard. Loading the computer with unwanted data results in the alteration of Lenny's prototype voice. The technician, who is unaware of the boy's fooling around reports the matter to Susan.

Susan analyses the robotic make up in her chamber, only to confirm the validity of the three laws of robotics. Meanwhile, it is reported that the
The main accusation against Lenny is that it has violated the first law of robotics. As a result, the robot is to be dismantled. But Susan is confident enough to argue that the flaw is due to human negligence particularly of the computer technician. She substantiates her hypothesis by pointing out that the technician lacks the required knowledge to measure the strength of the robot. In turn she also suggests that the technician might have instigated the robot to brush him aside which might have resulted in injury to him. By demonstrating her talent of robotics to the men present she resolves the problem. Ultimately, after the trial Lenny addressed her, "Mummie, I want you, I want you, Mummie." In the hands of Susan inanimate things like Lenny could also respond to 'mother's love'. Thus, the robopsychologist establishes the human flaw as opposed to the robotic ones.

Often, SF genre is criticised for lack of characterisation. On the contrary, "Lenny" is a classic example to prove that an SF story could also oscillate between a hardcore SF type and mainstream fiction. Secondly, often SF is also criticised for presenting a male dominated world. In this regard, Asimov has excelled in sketching the character of Susan.
Though the environment in which Susan lives, looks down upon women as mere 'meat', with her duty consciousness and 'Calvinism' she rises above the level of a robo-psychologist. Her earlier attempts had saved millions of dollars for the company. The company executives should have realised that more than production, maintenance is a challenging task. But she is a dignified lady with a devotion to duty. The writer is suggesting to the factory establishers that women too could bring credit to the firm. She could only, as a woman, exhibit and practise love for machines and they too like 'Lenny' would thereby reciprocate the same love for a harmonious relationship between man and machine.

In addition Asimov has established another innovative idea in the story that concepts were fed into the computers instead of the traditional customary words of instruction. It was inherent and well published to the public that robots were built with the presence of the Three Classic Laws of Robotics which ensured human safety at all times.

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The male order in society generally feels superior to the female. When the dominant male setup fails to solve a particular problem, and in the process if the women find a way out it is customary for the male class to label such instances as 'feminine intuition'. Asimov depicts one such technologically

Robopsychologist Clinton Madarian succeeds Susan after her retirement. The problem of the technological days was not only to make a space jump successfully at a speed equal to that of light, but also to discover a habitable world in the Galaxy. In order to exhibit the inferior nature of robots, the USR constructs a feminine robot — Jane 5 — with intuition. They wish to demonstrate to the public through such feminine robots that "women are not as intelligent as men [...]". Jane 5 is mentally backward. She is also fed with the power of decision making spontaneously like human beings. She is shorter and slimmer than the average robot. However, she possesses an air of feminity. In addition, she has a sweet voice with a disturbing contralto.

When crated to the working spot to provide her an opportunity to survey the field by herself at the Flagstaff Research Laboratory, she impresses every gentleman by her sweet voice. Men become conscious of their dress, position and speech while they speak to her.

During their return journey Madarian reports to Bogert:

She has given the answer [...]. She's given me the names of three stars within eighty light years, which she says, have sixty to ninety percent chances of possessing one habitable
planet each [...]. I even have a witness. Poor guy jumped two feet when Jane suddenly began to reel out the answer in her gorgeous voice.\(^{174}\)

While he is yet to complete the sentence, unfortunately, a meteor hits the airplane and it crashes and all aboard are destroyed. Thus, ninety-nine percent of success is spoiled by one percent of unpredictable accident.

Bogert's efforts to extract the ultimate answer given by Jane 5 from the dozen male research personnel at the Flagstaff finally prove futile. Even after her retirement the USR invites Susan to solve the mysterious puzzle. After thoroughly studying the case from several files she informs Bogert and Robertson that the problem has already been solved and comments that they were unable to deduce the evident answer. The legendary lady points out states that they were so narrow minded to presume only scientists as the men present in the airfoil, failing to recognise the chaffer of the truck as a human being. On enquiry Susan informs them that the chaffer had given out the names of three habitable planets.

In addition to the successful operations, the story also unravels the excellent character of Dr. Susan Calvin. With her years of experience as a robopsychologist, she traces out how robots are distinguished from men, though, in conception, all human beings are one and the same to a robot.
Susan points out indirectly the failure of men to trace the evidence. For Bogert, only scientists are men. It does not occur to him that the blue collared low paid driver is also a human being. In this respect, Susan takes the extreme natural stand in reorganising the evidence in solving the problem. Her sarcastic remarks might be effective in mending the arrogant self-esteemed attitude of men:

Feminine intuition? Is that what you wanted the robot for? You men. Faced with a woman reaching a correct conclusion and unable to accept the fact that she is your equal or superior in intelligence, you invent something called feminine intuition.¹⁷⁵

Susan appears in another robot story "Galley Slave"(1957) by Asimov. The robot 'Easy' in this story functions in a manner similar to the robot 'Sinner' in H.B.Fyfe's "The Well Oiled Machine" (1950) in Science Fiction Carnival (1953). 'Sinner' performs a number of tasks at a time in a printing press. Also, 'Sinner' brings fortune to its master Ed in rejuvenating the love of Helena. Thus, the story ends on the happy note of their marriage. Similarly, Easy is also a proof reading robot in "Galley Slave". Unlike in Fyfe's story, Easy has a human figure with only two arms, with the inclusion of an easy
flow of positronic brain paths. The robot is leased out to the Northern University. Every department of the University makes use of it whenever they feel the need to overcome greater drudgery.

The scene shifts suddenly to the courtroom. The cause of the suit is shrewdly not disclosed till the end of the story. Like a Perry Mason detective story, the story unfolds gradually and the reader is tension bound till the end. Ultimately it is made known that the plaintiff, Simon Ninheimer the head of the department of Sociology, has sued the USR claiming from the company a compensation of $750,000. Ninheimer's book Social Tensions Involved in Space-Flights and their Resolution has been proof-read by Easy and the plaintiff claims that Easy has spoilt his reputation as a scholar by altering his original manuscript. Ninheimer publishes the book in great haste without proper interpretations and acknowledgement. Even after a long time of examination, cross-examination, and interpretations, the case remains unsettled. The court takes an unprecedented decision to present Easy in the courtroom. Ninheimer becomes nervous. In the course of giving evidence, Easy says, "I would like to explain to every one that I did insert certain passages in the galley proofs that seemed directly opposed to what had been there at first." Spontaneously, the words come from Ninheimer "Damn you, you were instructed to keep your mouth shut about-" For the first time, the court was informed that the plaintiff had deliberately ordered the robot not to
disclose the truth. The thoughtless words of Ninheimer consequently doom the career and life of the plaintiff.

Susan visits Ninheimer on the following day. She informs him that his ignorance of robotics had resulted in his losing the case miserably. Ninheimer presumes that robots would behave just like human beings, while the robot would have actually lied to save the plaintiff. Susan highlights the fact that Ninheimer has failed to understand the precedence of the first two laws of robotics to the third law. She exhibits higher intellectual logic in tracing the motives behind the malicious attitude of the plaintiff. His ultimate intention is to raise an anti-robot riot. He plans his propaganda so that it would create resentment in the minds of the Earth people and robots would be banned on Earth.

Despite Susan's rationalistic analysis of Ninheimer's malicious intentions, he has his own way of understanding: he feels man should be left alone to promote his creative talents. Just like the creativity in pottery making, scholastic research should always remain independent of interference from other agents. The thrill that writing the manuscripts, proof-reading, compiling, and editing brings will be spoilt by the invasion of robots. He opines, "A book should take shape in the hands of the writer. [....] Typewriters and printing presses take away some, but your robot would deprive us of all."
Ultimately, Susan does not entirely succeed in convincing Ninheimer about the efficacy of robots.

Thus, the story depicts Susan as a successful robopsychologist. Yet, she can only tackle problems concerning robots and fails to convince Ninheimer of their utility. In practice, she has no experience in handling human problems. The point might have driven Asimov to create another classic character Elijah Baley who handles human problems efficiently in all the four robot novels and in one of the robotic short stories entitled "The Mirror Image". Elijah is a raw hand in the field of robot expertise. But as a humanist Asimov has filled the gap, which was lacking in Susan by introducing Elijah in the novel series. Hence a study of both the characters might contribute to an overall development of personality of a human being.

However, the story brings out an insight into the readers' mind that there is a shift from the hard core elements to the sociological points of view of study in SF. The Science fiction master Asimov, has experimented in this story by applying detective elements and the court scene interrogation techniques in his robotistic works most successfully. As a humanist Asimov has also exhibited his love for human values, ideologies and the methods of retaining creative abilities of man. In spite of the technological advancements, Asimov has cautioned the futurists about the domains of human creative intelligence. The process of preservation and restoration of scientific and
technological myths also seems to be equally important from this angle. The following story "Robot Dreams" witnesses the end of the Calvin era.

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The title story of *Robot Dreams* (1986) reflects the saturation point which the Three Laws of Robotics can reach, a trend which can be traced to the publication of "Cal" (1990). The story "Robot Dreams" demonstrates Asimov's final devastating characterisation of Susan: the exhibition of the egoistic attitude of the once 'Living Legend' reaches a high point in her destruction of the robot Elvex.

"Robot Dreams" begins with the invitation extended by the young robopsychologist Linda Rash to Susan to inspect robot Elvex. During her diagnosis she notices certain complexities in the pattern of the brain of the robot which is the result of using fractal geometry in designing the robot. The brain patterns are found to be remarkably like that of a human brain and robot Elvex is capable of dreaming.

The 'light in the dark' seen by robot Elvex turns out to be his dream of a large panorama in which robots are working. He dreams of robots, which are working on mining spots at various depths of Earth; of some who are labouring in heat and radiation and others in factories, or some under sea and
in space. In addition, he says, "I saw that all the robots were weary of responsibility and care, and I wished them to rest."

Susan is surprised and points out that robots would neither bow nor wish to rest. Elvex retorts that it happens so in his dreams where the robots need to protect their own existence. Susan rightly detects that Elvex is quoting the incomplete form of the third law. Hence, she tries to teach the robot to quote the laws in full. But the robot argues that in his dream the third law had ended only with 'existence'. She notices that the First and the Second Laws too are missing in the brain pattern of the robot.

Further, in her interrogation Susan questions Elvex whether he has seen any human beings in his dreams. Elvex answers in affirmative that he has seen in his dreams only one man. The man is none other than himself. Further, he confesses that in his dreams he has given an oracular verdict "Let my people go-", meaning thereby that robots are also people. After hearing these words, Susan shoots Elvex, an ending unusual in an Asimovian story.

Susan in earlier stories exhibits her love for robots. To her, robots form a flawless and incorruptible class of society. Throughout her career she remains unmarried, as she is content in the world of robots. She is also complimented by others that she is a 'robot in a woman's attire' as she solves many robot neuroses. She becomes a 'living legend' of robopsychology in the
USR. Killing a robot was not the only option left before her in this case. It would have been desirable for her to set an example to the young robopsychologist by solving the problem tactfully. She could have taught human ethics to the robot as in the case of "The Bicentennial Man" (1976). Or she could have shown the robot the glimpses of finer elements of thought and action in order to uplift the society of robots by encouraging them and demonstrating to them the way in which a man-machine symbiosis could be established. It seems that robots which pose themselves as superior to human beings have no place in Asimovian world.

As a counterpoint to Susan's mere intellectuality, Gladia Solaria, a central figure in *The Naked Sun* (1957), *The Robots of Dawn* (1983) and *Robots and Empire* (1985), develops from a mere femme fatale in the former to a world leader in the latter. Gladia is a very attractive woman with a triangular face, light brown hair, slim and graceful arms. In *The Naked Sun* she stands accused of her husband Rikaine Delmarre's murder and is absolved of the same by the Earthman Elijah Baley. Similarly, in *The Robots of Dawn*, he helps her by solving the mystery of the murdered humanoid robot Jander, who has been her substitute lover. In *Robots and Empire* the 233 year old Gladia lives with the two robots Daneel and Giskard who have been gifted to her by Dr. Fastolfe.
At this juncture, life is not at all exciting for her except her sweet memories of Elijah. Yet it is impossible for her to commit suicide in a world of robots as they are equipped with the First Law of Robotics and their motto is to protect human beings risking their own lives. Giskard using his telepathic powers infers that Gladia longs to return to Solaria and creates an opportunity for her to visit her motherland.

When she lands on Solaria, the odour of the plants reminds Gladia about her childhood, the taboo of 'viewing' against 'seeing' and then she recollects with utter despair the failure of her marriage. Yet her recollection of her happy moments with Elijah brings her solace as he had saved her during the most dangerous moments in her life. Still the homeland does not seem to be her own home because, "[...] this world [...] smelled like home but was home in no other way - just to touch something that was familiar by comparison."^^

From the Settlers' point of view however, she is the saviour of the race, as she has succeeded in the venture of overpowering the Solarian robots. Hence, before landing on the Baley world, Deejee praises her fulsomely: "You are the heroine of Solaria - save us, good friend of the Ancestor."^^ Yet, as is stereotypically expected of females, in reacting Gladia only reflects over the imperfectness of her physical body structure:
I was just about as old as I am now when you were born. When I was your age, I used to dream of your remote Ancestor. What's more, I've got an artificial hip joint. My left thumb [...] is strictly prosthetic, some of the nerves have been rebuilt. My teeth are all implanted ceramic. [...] Look at me and see me as I am! 183

D.G. however, responds with further compliments to her, "You're not tall enough, beautiful enough, majestic enough. But when the story of Solaria comes out, you will suddenly meet all requirements [...]. You are a legend and legends are larger than life." 184 Thus, the legendary lady of the Galaxy arrives on the Baley World in a bid to bring together the Spacers and the Settlers.

In a powerful speech, addressing the Settlers, initially, she drives home the point that both Settlers and Spacers are the descendants of the Earthpeople. Hence, she establishes that Settlers are not only friends, but also, kinsmen and kinswomen. She states that the only communicative language would be the language of the heart, which has no dialects.

In the early Robot novels, Gladia has a Solarian taboo against personal 'seeing' as against long distance 'viewing'. She fears earthly infections precisely because of her former training and lifestyle. But her character has been moulded and transformed in overcoming the Solarian taboos and in
Robots and Empire she is not afraid of the presence of even a Galaxy of spectators from the Outer world: Gladia is able to convince the robophobic crowd of the rightness of her actions in depending on Daneel and Giskard, by pointing out, "Daneel and Giskard are honored names on this world. They are used commonly by the descendants of Elijah Baley at his request. [...] These two robots have never forgotten Elijah Baley." She thus emerges as a public speaker par excellence.

Reflecting on the tremendous success of her powerful speech, Giskard analyses, "It is not reason that is contagious but emotion." The incident described above reflects Gladia's adaptability and the finer qualities of a Galaxy leader. She has exhibited tremendous energy in capturing the hearts of the masses. In her own life, she has overcome innumerable hurdles: from the position of an ordinary housewife on Solaria to the lady loved by the plainclothesman Elijah; she later migrates to Aurora where she inherits two classic robots of the Galaxy; she becomes the heroine of Solaria and reaches the zenith as a mythical woman ultimately becoming the guiding spirit of the Galaxy through her call for global peace and coexistence. Initially, Gladia states:

I have never done anything. I've amused myself in various trivial ways. I've engaged in force-field coloring and robot exodesign. I've made love and been a wife and mother
and - and - in none of these things have I ever been an individual of any account.\textsuperscript{187}

She however, later makes up her mind to transform herself and influence people:

I can choose a cause and make it my own. I have chosen a cause. I want to prevent war. I want the Universe populated by Spacers and Settlers alike. [...] I want to work so hard at this that after I am gone, history will have changed because of me and people say 'Things would not be as satisfactory as they are had it not been for her'.\textsuperscript{188}

She thus begins to rely more on human beings rather than robots. Because of her adaptability, Gladia becomes a legendary character of the galaxy in the robotistic works of Asimov. At first when she loses her husband, she is a mere sexual symbol. But soon she overcomes the taboos of Solaria and migrates to the Spacer World. She wins the heart of Fastolfe and inherits robot Jander who becomes her lover, only to lose him also. Her virtues are adaptability, maturity of the mind and well-balanced emotions. She survives even after the end of the novel series. Thus Gladia is an ideal woman of Asimovian creation.

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To sum up Asimov's portraiture of women characters, Susan Calvin and Gladia Solaria could be viewed as two different kinds of characters – the one solely intellectual, while the other develops from a merely beautiful woman to one who can think about galactic concerns. His minor women characters like Gracie Weston, Alvis and Dr. Vasilia too exhibit a wide range of portraiture as detailed below: In most of the short stories she appears in, Susan treats robots as her own children. She expresses mother's love towards all the 'Little Lost Robots'. Though the robots are soulless, physically crippled, and even in the masonic state in a few cases, Susan has extended unbiased treatment to all of them. Further, Susan exhibits remarkable maturity in her intellectual judgement though she fails to solve some of the problems of humanity.

Later Asimov has created the character Gladia for his robotic novel series. Gladia shows growth both in intellectual and emotional fields. Gladia is an ordinary housewife on Solaria. She makes her debut as a seductress. But circumstances modify her character. She has tremendous adaptability to new situations. There is a gradual growth in her mental make up from novel to novel. Ultimately, she is transformed into a galaxy leader also. Unlike weak and cardboard stereotypes, Asimovian women are strong, integral to protect Earth and ecology. They think of peace at the galaxy level. At the same time they are concerned about the survival of the human race in general.
Motherhood serves as an important concern to quite a few Asimovian women characters. In the first robotic story “Robbie” (1940) Asimov portrays the motherly concern of Mrs. Weston in bringing up her daughter Gladia. She is much worried whether her daughter should be entrusted to a robot nursemaid. In "Salley" (1953) there is an attempt to uplift the status of machinery to a human being. In another story "First Law"(1956) Asimov pictures a robot which prefers to save its 'pup' to its human master. Likewise in "Light Verse" (1973), Mrs. Alvis expresses her concern for the loss of the creative robot as though she has lost her own child. In "Christmas Without Rodney"(1988) Mrs. Gracie Howard proposes holiday for her childlike home robot 'Rodney'.

Asimov has also created some women of vicious character. In appearance Dr. Vasilia is the replica of Gladia Solaria. She is a roboticist at Auroran Robotic Institute and has the credit of making a telepathic robot Giskard. She has broken up her relationship with her genetic father because he has turned down her wish to have sex with him. Her attempts to get back Giskard prove futile. She is depicted as a self-centered woman. Similarly, the gynoid Landaree is a villain to mankind as her motto is to shoot human beings at sight.
Asimov also touches upon the issue of gender and hierarchy. For instance, Elijah thinks aloud about the new Secretary-General Lavinia Demechek:

The official was a woman.

There was no reason for this not to be. Any official might be a woman. The Secretary-General might be a woman. There were women in the police force, even a woman with the rank of Captain.¹⁸⁹

Allegorically robots too represent women. By portraying the status of robots one could correlate their plight to the position of women in contemporary society. In this regard, robots are also marginalised and treated as the 'other'. Formerly, Asimov used to name the robots as ZZ1, ZZ2, ZZ3, SPD (Speedy), LNE (Lenny), and Easy. Later Asimov has begun to identify robots as personalities. They are named as Andrew Martin, Daneel Olivaw, Jander, Giskard, Landaree, Elvex, Jane, Cal, Tony and others. In the last novel, the Settlers are named after the two robots namely, Daneel-Giskard as are the descendents of Elijah too. In the earlier works of Asimov, robots are perceived as neuter gender. But in the later works robots are addressed either as male or female. Further, in later novels robots perform a better role in human society and do not remain mere servants. Hence, by the end of the novel series Asimov has established that robots too could
equally compete with humans. In this regard, Daneel is a humaniform robot. As 'Cyborg feminism' advocates there is perfect harmony between machine and human culture and this is a novel perspective on gender bias. Asimov has symbolically attempted to portray women in the form of robots. There is not only a gradual transition in their make but they are also depicted as personalities.
Chapter III

End Notes


156 Ruthven, 36.


162 Pratt, et al., 35.
163 Pratt, et al., 35.

164 Phyllis J. Day, 14.


167 Asimov, *I, Robot*, 153

168 Asimov, "Little Lost Robot"(1941) *I, Robot*, 150


176 Asimov, "Galley Slave" (1957), *Visions*, 416.
177 Asimov, "Galley Slave", *Visions*, 417.

178 Asimov, "Galley Slave", *Visions*, 422.


180 Asimov, "Robot Dreams", *Dreams*, 57.


182 Asimov, *Robots and Empire*, 182.


184 Asimov, *Robots and Empire*, 182.

185 Asimov, *Robots and Empire*, 213.

186 Asimov, *Robots and Empire*, 222.


188 Asimov, *Robots and Empire*, 240.


190 See 'Cyborg Feminism': Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace ed.,