

Reading

Lecture Notes: Module 2

In this module, you will use the skills that you have learnt in the previous module to write summaries, critical analysis and review for stories. So, in this module, the following topics will be covered:

- 1) How to write a summary
- 2) How to conduct critical analysis
- 3) How to write a review

“A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies”

Writing a summary, critical analysis and review for a given story:

You will learn how to write a summary, critical analysis and review for a given story.

Summary:

Summary is the gist or the essence of the original text. When you summarise a portion of text, you know how much of the text you understand.

A summary is written in your own words. It should be written in a series of paragraphs. It begins with an introductory sentence that states the text's title, author and main point as you go through it.

A summary contains only the ideas of the original text. You should not insert any of your own opinions, interpretations, deductions or comments into a summary.

While writing a summary, try to identify the important points and string them together. Overall, it should give a clear picture of the entire text being studied. You can quote some passages for the text word-to-word but only to support the author's view or your claim. Use quotation marks such as “...” when you quote words from the text.

Write a last sentence that ‘wraps up’ or sums up your summary that is often a simple rephrasing of the main point.

Critical Analysis:

Writing a critical analysis of a short story or a novel helps you to look at the story critically. Here, you can write your own opinions, use your arguments and discuss the text thoroughly. Analysis improves one's understanding of the text and the author's purpose of writing it. You get to know the style and other language aspects, and further, you will be able to assess other works of the author.

Review:

A review of a text is done by scanning the entire text and writing your opinion about it.

You can include and think about the following points while writing a review:

- 1) State the title and author of the story/novel
- 2) Mention the genre or type of writing
- 3) Introduce and briefly summarise the work
- 4) State the author's purpose
- 5) State your view/impression of the author's success
- 6) Mention what you particularly like about the story
- 7) Specify what you did not like or understand about the story
- 8) Mention the values and vocabulary that you picked up
- 9) Avoid introducing your ideas by 'I think' or 'in my opinion'. Focus on the subject of your analysis, not on yourself. Identifying your opinions weakens them
- 10) Find evidence for your view from the text itself
- 11) If necessary, quote some words, facts, etc.
- 12) Mention the setting of the story and state whether it is appropriate to the genre
- 13) Describe how well the characters have developed: do they think, feel, speak and act in a believable way?
- 14) Describe how well the plot is structured: Is the action suspenseful enough? Are the events too predictable?
- 15) Specify the theme or the central idea of the story
- 16) State whether the story has a 'coda' or a lesson; if yes, specify it
- 17) Specify whether the story has a 'twist' or an unexpected ending
- 18) Mention whether the author uses any literary devices, such as metaphor, simile or alliteration
- 19) Determine the purpose that could be:

- o To inform with factual material
- o To persuade with appeal to reason or emotions
- o To entertain (to affect people's emotions)

20) Evaluate the means by which the author has accomplished his purpose

21) Remember that the purpose of a critical analysis is not merely to inform but also to evaluate the worth, utility, excellence, distinction, truth, validity, beauty or goodness of a text

22) Specify whether there is a controversy surrounding either the passage or the subject that it concerns

23) Specify the subject matter that is of current interest

24) Mention the overall value of the passage

25) Finally, state whether you recommend the story for others to read; if not, write the reason for it

Writing summary, critical analysis and review for Selected Stories:

You will practise how to write a summary, a critical analysis and a review by trying to write them for these stories. The selected stories are of the science fiction genre. They are written by Isaac Asimov who is also known as the father of modern science fiction. These stories are taken from his short story collection *I, Robot*. They are as follows:

- 1) Robbie
- 2) Runaround
- 3) Reason
- 4) Catch That Rabbit
- 5) Liar
- 6) Little Lost Robot

Introduction to the story collection *I, Robot*

All the stories in *I, Robot* collection are told by Susan Calvin to a journalist in the year 2057. Susan is a 75-year-old robot psychologist in the U.S. Robots and Mechanical Men Inc. She is seen as a cold, unemotional person but has warm feelings for robots. She recalls her experiences with some robots. She says "They're a cleaner and better breed than we (humans) are." She remembers how, when the robots were first introduced, labour unions opposed them and religious groups also objected to their use.

ROBBIE

Summary:

The story opens in 1998 with Robbie, the robot, playing hide-and-seek with Gloria, a 9-year-old girl. Robot is a very primitive robot and cannot speak. He loves Gloria and takes good care of her. Robbie lets Gloria win in hide-and-seek only to please her. Gloria taunts him that he cannot run, and Robbie denies the charge, running away again. Gloria then rides on Robbie pretending to play a pirate game. As a reward, Gloria tells him the Cinderella story, but they are interrupted by Gloria's mother who calls her in.

Mrs Weston is unhappy with Gloria's love for and dependence on Robbie. She tells her husband that they should get rid of Robbie soon. However, Mr Weston says that the child is safer with a robot than a human maid because robots would not hurt human beings as per the First Law of Robots. However, Mrs Weston says that the neighbours are talking about Robbie, and finally, Mr Weston agrees to send Robbie away, though that is against his wish. Gloria is heartbroken when she finds Robbie gone and gets into a crying fit. Mrs Weston says that Robbie is only a machine, and she just walks away, but Gloria cries "He was a person just like you and me, and he was my friend. I want him back." She does not like a small dog that her mother gives her instead of Robbie.

As Gloria keeps asking for Robbie and is not eating well, her health is affected. For a change of scene, her parents take her to New York, and Gloria enjoys the ride to Earth and is busy watching the zoo, museum and many parks with her parents. She hopes that her parents will search for Robbie. When they visit the Museum of Science and Industry, Gloria escapes her mother's grip on her hand and runs away to a place where there are talking robots. While she is asking the Talking Robot about missing Robbie, her mother takes her away.

As part of their attempts to convince Gloria that Robbie is only a machine, they take her to the U.S. Robots Mechanical Men Inc. Company and show her how robots are made by men by putting together some parts. They hope that by seeing this, Gloria will forget about Robbie. However, there, Gloria finds Robbie in a huge hall and runs towards him happily, calling his name loudly, but then, a big tractor is set to cross her path. Mr Struthers in charge of operations is stunned. Mr Weston jumps down and tries to run towards Gloria to save her. Mr Struthers gives a command to some people to halt the tractor. However, they are slow in doing it. Meanwhile, Robbie notices Gloria and the tractor that is going to hit her and runs fast to pull Gloria away just in time. Mrs Weston is now convinced that robots would help humans and would never hurt them. She agrees to get Robbie back, and Gloria is delighted.

She is happy to get her friend back and goes on playing with him until she turns 15. Then, as an adult, she sees that Robbie is a machine and leaves him.

This was in 1998. Only a few years later, speaking robots were invented in 2002. Susan recalls her experience with one such modern robot that forms the basis for the next story in the collection *I, Robot*.

Critical analysis:

Robbie is a short story written by Isaac Asimov, the famous science fiction writer. The story is set in the future and is of the science fiction genre. Asimov is reputed for writing this type of fiction in which the setting is in the future, and machines play a major role. The relation between man and machine, particularly robots, is the major recurring theme in his work.

Robbie is a good example of this type of writing. The author's purpose is to make man think about machines and technology in new ways. He does not present robots as evil—those that go out of control and kill everyone in sight.

Review:

Summary: The story can be briefly described as follows: A journalist interviews Susan Calvin, the robot psychologist in the U.S. Robot and Mechanical Men Inc. Company, and she recalls her experiences. All the other stories in *I, Robot* share this framework. Gloria, a young girl, grows quite fond of Robbie, the robot that her parents buy to keep Gloria safe and give her company. Robbie cannot speak—the story is set in 1998, and a few years later, more advanced speaking robots are made. However, Robbie is primitive; he can run fast or slow, lift Gloria and listen to her stories. After some time, Mrs Weston, Gloria's mother, wants to send Robbie away because the neighbours say that the robot can harm Gloria and stop speaking to her. Robbie is suddenly sent away to a New York research station on Earth, and Gloria is quite sad. She refuses to eat, and her health is affected. Her parents buy her a dog, but Gloria is not interested. They take her on vacation to Earth and visit a zoo, museum and underwater wonders, but Gloria keeps asking her parents to get Robbie back. They want to show Robbie as a dull machine full of wires and wheels. At a research station, Gloria spots Robbie and runs towards him without looking at a tractor that is in her path. However, Robbie saves Gloria by running quickly and lifting the girl out of danger. Mrs Weston then agrees to get Robbie back. Gloria leaves Robbie only when she grows up.

Asimov's purpose for writing *Robbie* is to show that machines are not harmful and can be friendly and helpful to man. So, he shows Robbie as a machine that has feelings of love and is kind, and so, it protects Gloria at all times from any danger.

The author succeeds in his purpose. The readers appreciate Robbie and come to like him. Robots are not killer machines.

What I like about the story: The best thing about the story is the loving relationship between Gloria and Robbie that touches our hearts. Robbie is presented in human terms, and one comes to like and trust Robbie, similar to how Gloria does. At the same time, you can see the view of Gloria's mother and understand her concern. Mr Weston is likeable, as he likes Robbie. There is an atmosphere of science fiction movies. The difference between this galaxy and Earth is clearly drawn in terms of time, distance and weather. We travel and live in a foreign world, and that feeling is good.

Asimov argues that robots can be friendly, and his strategy for proving this is the creation of an attractive, human-like robot Robbie and show that it is good, disciplined and loving. We can agree with Gloria when she cries out "He was not a machine! He was a person just like you and me, and he was my friend. I want him back". The reader also wants Robbie back! Gloria is 'determined and purposeful'.

The setting is suitable to the story, and the correct atmosphere is created by describing Gloria's journey to Earth in a gyro-taxi and the characters gaining weight owing to Earth's gravity.

The plot is well-structured, and suspense is maintained. The reader is afraid that Robbie will change and harm the girl. However, the ending is a happy one. There is no unexpected ending except for the climax in which Gloria was involved in a possible accident.

Vocabulary: We can pick up new vocabulary such as gyro-taxi and some technical terms.

Values: The human values that the story supports are valuable. They are about love, trust and positive thinking of relations between man and machine.

Controversy: When the story was written, the controversy regarding robots dominating humans and their effects was a dominating one. The theme of robots ruling the world is a current one. There is controversy regarding whether man or the machine will win. However, the story engages the reader deeply and gives a satisfactory feeling at the end. The happy ending creates hope for a more positive attitude towards robots and their relations with humans.

I will surely recommend this story for others to read.

RUNAROUND

Summary:

The story *Runaround* is an interesting continuation of what Asimov predicts in *Robbie*. It is the story of Speedy, another robot with the initials SPD 13. However, Speedy is far different from Robbie because he is a highly developed version and can speak and move quite fast. He can also follow his Master's words much better and come to their rescue quite quickly.

Powell and Donovan are two scientists who are sent to Mercury from the Space Station. Their job is to report on the advisability of reopening the sun-side Mining Station with modern techniques and robots. One of their jobs there is to get selenium. They are used to the extremely high radiation and heat on Mercury. They are on the dark side of the planet, and on the bright side, the heat is more than 80°. It would kill any human being in seconds. So, they send Speedy to get selenium for them. The action begins with the scientists waiting for the return of Speedy. He is already delayed.

The scientists track Speedy's movements and discover, to their surprise, that Speedy is not obeying their orders. The order was getting 1 kilogram of selenium. However, after nearing the selenium dump, Speedy wanders and starts playing games with Powell. He comes close, sings songs and then runs away. He is at least 17 kilometres away and in the hot, open Mercury sun. So, the scientists use old robots that are left unused for 10 years, climb on to them, travel through the mines and reach Speedy.

They understand Speedy's problem. He is confused by the orders that govern all robots and are fixed in his positronic brain. The First Law is that a robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm. The Second Law states that a robot must obey the orders given to it by human beings except when such orders would conflict with the First Law. The Third Law is that a robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Laws. However, when Speedy approaches the selenium pool, he gets confused. Seeing the danger in the centre of the selenium pool, the Third Law gets activated and Speedy turns away from the pool. Speedy goes around in circles because of the counterforces set up by each Law. One law cancels the other and sets up an equilibrium. As he approaches the selenium pool, at a certain distance from it, the very high Rule 3 potential exactly balances the low Rule 2's

potential, striking a balance. So, Speedy goes round in circles until he is brought out of the balance. The only answer is to increase the concentration of carbon monoxide near Speedy.

The danger in the selenium pool is the leaking of carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide coming in contact with iron, that is, a robot's body, produces iron carbonyl, reducing Speedy to powder. So, Speedy is in danger as well. Powell and Donovan are in a dilemma. They cannot expose themselves to Mercury's hot sun; their horse robots cannot walk fast. They decide to create carbon monoxide by getting the robot horses to throw blue crystals containing oxalic acid to a place nearest to Speedy. Exposure to the hot Mercury sun will release oxalic acid from the crystals and produce carbon monoxide. However, the dose is not enough, and no change occurs in Speedy's erratic movements. So, bringing Rule 3 into play, Powell exposes himself to danger by walking in the sun near Speedy. Then, the old horse robot, following rule 1 asks his master Powell to mount him, it is quite slow, and Powell will die in minutes. He shouts to Speedy for help, and Speedy saves him by rushing him to the shade of the cliff. Then, naturally, Speedy gets more selenium from other pools easily. Speedy even apologises for not following their commands. As their mission to get selenium is completed, Powell and Donovan are sent back to the Space Station. They happily go into that cool shade escaping the blazing heat of the Mercury sun.

Critical analysis:

Runaround is a short story written by Isaac Asimov, the famous science fiction writer. The story is set on the planet Mercury in the future and written in the genre of science fiction. Asimov is reputed for writing this type of fiction in which the setting is quite often in the future, and machines and robots play key roles. As in the earlier story *Robbie*, Asimov deals with the positive relations between man and robots. His purpose is to show that robots can be harmless and even actively helpful to man.

Review:

Summary: The story of *Runaround* can be briefly described as follows: Two scientists from a Space Station—Powell and Donovan—are sent to the planet Mercury to collect selenium. They employ Speedy, a modern, speaking robot for this purpose. However, Speedy senses the danger of carbon monoxide that is present in the selenium pools and runs around in circles, unable to obey their command. The scientists understand that Speedy is confused because the Rules governing robots clash among themselves, thereby creating a balance.

This does not give Speedy any clarity, and so, he wanders around. The scientists try to reach him, but the selenium pools are on the open Mercury sun-side, and the temperature there is extremely high. Exposure to the Mercury sun will kill humans. So, the scientists use old, rusted robots and climb them to go near the pool through the mines. They make the robots throw crystals containing oxalic acid, and on falling on Mercury's surface, the crystals release oxalic acid and produce carbon monoxide on coming into contact with heat. However, not enough carbon monoxide is produced, and Speedy still does not obey their commands. It is only when Powell walks into the sun and cries for help that Speedy reacts to Rule 1 and saves him. Then, on becoming normal, Speedy gets enough selenium, and the scientists happily return to the cool Space Station.

Asimov's purpose is to present the positive side of robots. He makes Speedy, the robot, a likeable figure. His loyalty to his Master is a good quality. In the story, he shows different rules for men and machines. Powell and Donovan also are bound by human values. They take the dangerous step of walking into the sun by lottery.

What I like about the story: The story's setting on Mercury is attractive. It has a different atmosphere. The world of *Runaround* is a fine mix of human and mechanical personalities. The characters are very real and well-developed. Even robots have their own values such as loyalty and discipline. We need to learn such values from these machines. The scientific facts such as Mercury's harsh climate and the power of selenium as well as the problem of getting Speedy back to normalcy are very interesting. Unlike Robbie, Speedy is more advanced. However, both are extremely loyal. Speedy even apologises for not listening to its Master. Even the older, primitive, rusting horse-type robots do their work very well. Man needs to learn a lot from these machines. The atmosphere of Mercury with its blazing sun is well-picturised.

Some statements from the story are worth quoting. The three rules for robots are well-made. They follow a definite ethics and moral code. The old robots appear to be 'unconcerned' but do their duty. "There are human rules of behaviour too" says Donovan when they have to decide who between them should go out in the Mercury sun.

The plot is neatly structured, giving thrills at every step. There comes a problem every few minutes as the story develops, and the solution seems to come naturally but makes it look like magic.

The author succeeds in not only entertaining the readers but also imparting values. He appeals to our senses as well as our emotions. It is not easy to bring human emotions in a story dealing with machines, but Asimov is able to do it.

Controversy: There is a controversy regarding the use of machines and robots. There is a lot of distrust and critical attitude towards robots on Earth. However, in such doubtful times, Asimov writes positive stories about them. His stories are also convincing. Robots are of current interest. Now, robots are being used in many fields, even as teachers and waiters in hotels. Robotic surgery has come to be accepted.

I will recommend this story *Runaround* to others, as it is interesting to read and presents good values.

REASON

Summary:

Reason by Asimov presents another side of the world of robots. Gregory Powell and Donovan are on Solar Station#5 that is far away. In two weeks, they have to train the smaller robots to run the Station completely on their own. They deal with a new, advanced Robot QT-1. The scientists call him Cutie. Cutie is very smart, even smarter than Speedy. Powell lectures Cutie on his creation. He tells him that he is created by scientists. "One week ago, Donovan and I put you together." However, Cutie only looks at him and asks him if this is true. Is it possible for them to make a robot such as Cutie? Cutie does not accept his creators as his Masters. He asks if Powell realises that he is making a huge claim and asks its meaning. Powell tells him "Something made you Cutie". Cutie replies there should be another, more satisfactory explanation, and he will find it. He says that "a chain of valid reasoning can end only with the determination of truth". Powell smiles at Cutie and says that he is the first robot who has ever been curious about his own existence. Then, he shows him Earth and other planets using a telescope present in another room. Cutie seems to understand but asks Powell why he came into the picture. Powell explains that robots are being built to do the duties of running these Space Stations that provide energy to planets such as Earth. They can stand the heat and electronic storms much better than humans. When they learn to carry out these maintenance routines, humans will put them in charge and leave. So far, two human executives—like Powell and Donovan—are managing them. However, in the future, only robots such as Cutie will take over the work and responsibility of running the Station.

Powell is surprised when Cutie is not convinced. He says that it is only a hypothesis. Cutie declares that the Master created humans first who are lower-level beings, and then, he

made the smarter robots. He says that from now on, he will serve the Master, but Powell tells him sharply to run the converter and maintain it. Otherwise, he will dismantle him.

Donovan comes in to announce that an electronic storm is coming up. Powell tells him that Cutie is acting smart and refuses to believe that he is only a machine put together by them. They notice that the other robots were not working and standing before Cutie who clearly says that he is the Master's prophet. The robots kneel before him. He says that they know the truth and recognise the Master as Supreme and Cutie as his prophet. They will not obey orders anymore. Donovan spits out in his anger on the L-tubes that need to be cleaned in two days by the robots. Cutie shows his anger, his red eyes deepen, and he carries Donovan and puts him on the floor outside. Cutie tells the scientists not to enter the control room and that they are not allowed from inside going forward. He takes over control.

The electronic storm approaches fast and seems to be headed directly towards Earth. Cutie's job is to control and divert it. Meanwhile, Cutie comes in and says that the scientists' job is over, and he will give them food and shelter if they do not enter the control room. He is showing affection for "these inferior creatures with poor reasoning faculties". He gives explanations based on only logic when Powell asks him to explain Earth and other stars. Cutie says that he need not understand why the beams for conveying energy are made by the Master. He will only serve the Master and obey his orders.

The scientists then try to convince Cutie by putting together a smaller MC model robot in front of his eyes, plant a positronic brain in it and give it life by passing electric power to it, but Cutie does not admit their superiority. He says that they only assembled the parts made by the Master. Then, Powell asks if he read any books in the library about creation and life. Cutie says that he read them, as they are Master's creations but does not believe in them.

Cutie controls the beam to stop the storm from hitting the Earth. He does it perfectly, but he says that he kept all dials, that planets in balance. Finally, unable to convince Cutie, the two scientists leave the Solar Station, as two others from the Space Station come to relieve them. He tells them that the robot is good, and they do not have to bother much about controls!

Critical analysis:

The third story in the series of *I, Robot* written by Isaac Asimov—*Reason*—shows another aspect of the growing smartness of robots. This is another science fiction story with robots and human beings in clash.

Review:**Summary:**

QT-1 robot, called Cutie in the story, is a new model that does not believe that human beings created the supreme robots who are more powerful than humans. Cutie even goes to the extent of calling itself a Prophet of the Energy Creator—his Master—who created the robots. Under its influence, the other working robots obey it but not Powell and Donovan who are sent to the Space Station to monitor them.

Cutie's religion spreads to the other robots, and they obey Cutie but Powell or Donovan do not. Meanwhile, a dangerous electron storm approaches Earth. The beam from the Space Station must be firmly focused on Earth to avoid full scale damage. Cutie takes control, as it does not believe in robots. Donovan and Powell try to argue with Cutie, but all their attempts fail. Then, they try to convince Cutie that humans build robots by building a robot themselves. Cutie argues that the pair only assembled the robot; they did not create it. The electron storm approaches and, luckily, Cutie keeps the beam focused because he believes that he serves the Converter by keeping its instrumentation in balance. Powell points out that the Second Law (always obey human orders) requires Cutie to obey. No matter what robots believe to be the ultimate source of command, they will still do their duties.

The author's purpose is to raise extremely important questions about man's superiority over robots and the growing independence of robots. He poses the question: are robots better than humans who made them? What if robots completely dominate man? Is it good for humanity? Can we trust robots to be good and protective? He leaves it to us to think about these issues.

In **my view**, the story *Reason* is quite important. It makes us think and speculate about our future in relation to robots. Are robots slaves only? Can they or should they do more? Who will control them? Can man really control extremely smart robots who learn to reason and find ways to make man their slaves.

What I like about the story: It is a brief story. Its theme is relevant in the modern world. In a few pages, Asimov presents highly sensitive questions. There is a possibility of robots becoming independent of man and declaring their freedom. They may control human beings. The story makes us think seriously about many issues. As Cutie says, reasoning is supreme, and smart robots like Cutie raise questions about who is supreme.

Interestingly, Cutie calls the creator of these machines the Master and calls himself the Prophet. This is a religious colour. It has learnt man's values and qualities such as religious

faith and loyalty. The robot Cutie is almost human! However, he does not care for Powell and Donovan who made him, which is a disturbing trend. We wonder what Cutie will do in future with his abilities. How long will he listen to the Master? What if he defies the Master as well? Is man in danger from robots? Unlike earlier robots, Cutie shows emotions such as pity, sympathy, love and protection towards the scientists. He is efficient and does his job perfectly. However, similar to Powell and Donovan, we come to fear him.

The setting is Solar Station#5, which is far away from the Space Station (the headquarters of humans in space).

The characters are human and mechanical. Cutie becomes almost human in his emotions. We cannot blame him; he knows only the dials and instruments. He has no flesh and bones and cannot feel and think like people do. Powell and Donovan are typical scientists. By the end, Powell seems to agree with Cutie. He says that it does not matter what Cutie believes as long as he does his job well. He is objective but is concerned about what Cutie might do in the future.

Twist in the tail: The story has a twist at the end. We expect the scientists Powell and Donovan to take Cutie under their control or take him to pieces. However, Powell leaves things as they are. If Cutie is able to run the Space Station well, it is enough. Nevertheless, Cutie's smartness poses serious questions for the future of mankind. How safe is man from the machine?

The world is accepting robots in many fields, including surgery. Now, we believe the robotic surgeon more than a human one. Such is the efficiency and reliability of robots. However, many people are afraid of and suspicious about the use of robots in all contexts. Asimov tries here to clear such doubts. He presents robots as neutral. If they have no human emotions such as pity and caring, they do not have negative emotions as well, which is a big advantage.

On the whole, the *Reason* story makes us think deeply about man-machine relations. We need to take sides either for or against robots. Also, it makes us judge humans from many new angles. Can robots become a new super race by avoiding man's defects and being intelligent, kind and protective? Is that desirable?

I recommend this story for others to read. It teaches many valuable lessons.

CATCH THAT RABBIT

Summary:

This is another story by Asimov in the series *I, Robot*. Powell and Donovan are sent to an asteroid this time. Their job is to supervise the mining work there that is being carried out by

robots. A master robot called DV-5 is in charge of the mining operation at the field level. Powell says that it is not their job to supervise work at all times. Donovan says that the robot passed every test at the US Robots in the home laboratories. It is testified by US Robots to work on an asteroid. However, some robots are not passing the tests. Powell and Donovan have to explain why they are failing the tests. In only 10 days, their stay on the asteroid will get over. Before that, they must find the solution. They see that DV-5 is a smart robot and can speak and control the 'fingers' that are smaller robots under his control.

Powell observes that when he watched the robots, they worked perfectly, but when he did not watch them, the robots failed in their work of bringing ore from the mines on the asteroid. So, they have to find out why they are failing. The six smaller robots are part of DV-5. He is their Master. Powell describes Dave (DV-5) as "a stable, rock-bottom mining robot".

Dv-5 comes in to sit with the scientists. He is 7 feet tall and made of half-ton of metal and electricity. He is designed as the thinking unit of an integrated 7-unit robot team. He apologises that his robots are not getting more ore. They are a thousand tons behind schedule in getting ore. He says that he cannot understand why they are unable to do so. Powell puts him through a thorough test and finds everything to be fine. Donovan says that he finds it suspicious that Dave fails only when he is not watched. They put on visiplates and watch the robots carefully. Even as they watch, the robots walk in a military march formation. Donovan wonders if Dave is training an army of robots. However, Powell says that it goes against the First Law of Robotics that robots will harm humans.

The mystery is that Dave fails in his work only when both scientists are absent. When one of them comes back, he starts behaving correctly. The robot's personal initiative is less. They wonder if they need to check each part of Dave for faults, but the testing mechanisms are on Earth and cannot be transported. They ask a finger robot what is disturbing their work. He says that some order would be given, and before they could execute it, another would be given asking them to march, but he can say no more. They have to find out the order that Dave is giving them.

With two days to go, the scientists are desperate. They plan to create an emergency to watch the robots because it was only during emergencies that the robots failed. They follow the robots from a high ground and then go into the mine after them at a distance. They do not want to be seen. However, it turns out that when they detonate a point of the cave near them, they realise that the robots are coming towards them in that cave from the opposite direction. Powell shoots down a finger robot, and when personal initiative decreases, Dave becomes normal. Handling 6 sub-robots was difficult for him. Dave comes to rescue them

from the fallen cave. The robots were dancing when Dave was twisting and turning his fingers on his hands.

The scientists get ready to return to their base. Dave is a normal robot, unlike Cutie. Asimov presents the robot's human side.

Critical analysis:

This is a story by Asimov, part of the series of *I, Robot* stories. This is a science fiction story that is similar to others in the series.

Review:

Summary:

Susan Calvin is narrating how Powell and Donovan, two scientists who are deputed from Earth to solve problems in the System, are sent to an asteroid. There, DV-5, called Dave, a robot needs to be set right. DV-5 is a smart robot that is in charge of six sub-robots. When Powell and Donovan watch him, DV-5 works perfectly. When they are not watching, DV-5 stops mining and starts marching his sub-robots in drills. When asked, Dave fails to explain why he is doing this. Donovan and Powell interview a sub robot but that feels like asking a 'finger' why the hand does what it does. They think that situations requiring personal initiative (e.g., emergencies) cause the problem. However, they cannot understand the reason for this because Dave always works correctly when they are present. They cannot take Dave apart to test him: all the circuits are intertwined, which means that testing them in isolation will not help. They decide to create an emergency without Dave knowing and then watch what happens. They cause a cave-in in the mines by themselves, but Dave goes marching off with his sub-robots, leaving them trapped. However, when Powell shoots one of the sub-robots, Dave comes back to rescue them. Powell figured out that the six sub-robots needed more command attention during an emergency, which put too much stress on "a special co-ordinating circuit." With fewer robots to attend to, Dave was able to handle emergencies.

The author's purpose is to show that robots work better only in the way in which they are made by humans. Not every robot is a dangerous one, causing harm to humans. Here, he shows a robot whose working capacity is limited.

What I like about the story is that it presents robots as machines that have limitations. The lesson is that all robots are not bad and try to harm or dominate humans. Powell and Donovan are extremely committed scientists and believe that robots are their slaves and

should be controlled. If they do not follow orders, they can be taken apart, which is a common belief about robots. In other stories, Asimov has shown rebel robots as in the story *Reason*. Powell and Donovan succeed because they understand robots very well. DV-5 is much more developed than Robbie. So, he is entrusted with the task of managing the mining duties of six sub-robots. DV-5 is efficient. He is more likeable than Cutie who is much smarter but defies humans.

The main interest of the story is to show that humans can leave robots in charge when they are capable. The second one is that robots can have limited abilities, such as DV-5. They are not always super-efficient.

Setting: The story takes place entirely on an asteroid.

Characters: Powell and Donovan are very convincing as scientists. They apply logic and reason for solving problems. Powell differs from Donovan with respect to his approach to solving problems. Their attitude towards robots is normal. They are tools to carry out the work assigned to them. They accept the robot's efficiency in the story '*Reason*'. Here, they are ready to take DV-5 apart only to find that the reason for his odd behaviour in their absence. DV-5 is a machine but shows human feelings. He even uses a man's body language.

Controversy: The story can be seen against the controversy raging on Earth about robots. Many think that robots can be harmful, but in many fields such as medicine and in factories, they are being employed. There are some robot teachers as well. So, the story is of interest to us from that angle. In the story *Catch that Rabbit*, the robot's limitations are shown. Nevertheless, even with those limitations or because of them, the robot DV 5 is liked by readers.

I will recommend this story for others to read. It will change our common attitude that robots are highly powerful and will control and, perhaps replace, humans in the future.

LIAR

SUMMARY:

Isaac Asimov wrote *Liar* in the science fiction genre. It is part of the series of stories, *I, Robot* in which Susan Calvin, the robot psychologist employed by the U.S. Robot and Mechanical Men Inc. Company in the USA, narrates her experiences to a journalist.

The story starts with a discussion among the scientists. Lanning, an elderly scientist in the U.S. Robots Company, wonders why the 34th model of robots—RD-34—made by them has developed the gift of reading the thoughts of people. It is a strange, highly unusual mind-reading robot. Bogert, an old mathematician, reminds Milton Ashe, who is a young scientist, that he could not have checked thousands of parts being used in assembling the robot. The mistake could be anywhere. Susan joins them and asks them not to blame each other but to try to look for the solution.

Bogert suggests that the strange behaviour of RB 34 should be kept a secret. All of them agree on that. Lanning, who is the Head, tells Ashe to check the assembly line for any error. It was Ashe who first realised that RB-34 was reading his thoughts. Susan goes to meet RB 34, and after reading quickly through a book she gives him, RB 34 tells her that all these scientific texts are not interesting to him. He likes fiction that presents the interactions among people with different personalities. Then, the robot tells her a lie that Milton Ashe loves her in spite of her age and plain looks. Susan believes it and starts applying makeup to look attractive to Ashe.

Bogert asks RB 34 to analyse through mathematics how he developed mind reading. RB 34 avoids giving any reply but tells him that Lanning has resigned and that Bogert would be the next Director. Bogert argues with Lanning about the RB 34 problem and asks him not to hand it over to the National Board. Soon, he finds that the robot was lying about Lanning's resignation. In her conversation with Ashe, Susan is shocked to learn that Ashe is going to marry another girl. So, she knows that RB 34 is lying. They now believe that RB 34 is telling them what they wanted to hear, not the truth.

Link for part 2 of the document:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1AtfQdbloLxTNEksOh3A8tFx5lYjCShLto7we1PLMXLE/edit>