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Feminization of a Woman

A woman is strong, a woman is amazing, and finally a woman is a doctor. In *I, Robot*, by Isaac Asimov the main character Dr. Susan Calvin is a robot psychologist at U.S. Robots. During the time period in which this was written a woman was expected to clean the house, prepare meals, cater to her husband's needs, and to have and take care of children. Very few women worked so when Asimov wrote this a woman holding such a high position was very unlikely. Susan Calvin did not necessarily fit into the definition of what a woman should be during that time—she stood out. At the same time as she was overcoming stereotypes she was expected to suppress her feelings and emotions in order to becoming a respected doctor amongst her peers. In *I, Robot*, by Isaac Asimov the main character, Susan Calvin, breaks stereotypes and is held back by discrimination as ~~she is~~ a woman in the working world.

It is not easy to break stereotypes ~~for~~^{since} people will see what they want to see, think what they want to think and believe what they want to believe. Isaac Asimov wrote the story "Liar!" as a part of his collection of stories that make up *I, Robot*, in 1941 around the time that women were starting to take the jobs of their men while they were fighting in the war (History Net). ~~Now~~ many people did not like the fact that women were taking these jobs because this all occurred during the depression where unemployment was high. Women filling these positions meant that they were taking jobs from unemployed men. Women were not only helping in factories and

many other civil service jobs, but they were also were working as chemists and engineers to help develop weapons for the war, in fact many women helped with the Manhattan project (Khan Academy). This was not the beginning of women in the workplace for women had been in the workplace long before the war, but this was a big deal for women, ^{because} ~~for~~ during this time the amount of women in the workplace increased by twenty-five to thirty-five percent. It showed that women can do what any man can do, which many men did not like nor agree with.

Isaac Asimov supported the fight for equality as he wrote his short stories in *I, Robot*.

Susan Calvin was his main character and she was a doctor and robot psychologist or as it is put in the story, robo psychologist. As a woman she held a very high position, not only that she was also very respected in her field and many of the men she worked with respected and trusted her. ^{but}

Even though Susan was a strong character, and was very respected, of all the jobs in the story which were, Officer of U. S. Robot amp; Mechanical Men, Mathematician, and Director of U.S.

Robot, she was was psychologist. Psychologists nowadays are very respected, but regardless they still deal with feelings, and another stereotype for women is that women are dominated by feelings and emotions so, naturally, she was a psychologist who dealt with robots. Donna

Haraway wrote in "A Cyborg Manifesto" about feminizing jobs, which means "to make extremely vulnerable; able to be disassembled, reassembled, exploited as a reserve labor force; seen as less then workers then as servers..." (Haraway 304). The list goes on, the point is that

when a woman takes on a job any job it is feminized and that is seen in *I, Robot* as Susan Calvin is a doctor amongst many other men. [↑] [↑]

The interesting thing is that Susan Calvin was not one who showed a whole lot of emotions, she is depicted as repressed and unfeminine (Merrick 755). "Well, I've been called a

I know what you're saying, but it could be clearer...

Repetitive

robot myself. Surely, they've told you I'm not human" (Asimov 3). She said this about herself to a reporter who was interviewing her who had heard this comment from others. She said this because she was not necessarily the "prettiest". The reporter came right out and said that almost at the very beginning of the "Introduction". "She was a frosty girl, plain and colorless, who protected herself against a world she disliked by a masklike expression and a hypertrophy of intellect" (Asimov 3). Susan Calvin masked her feminine qualities in order to maintain her scientific identity (Merrick 755).

~~Now~~ in "Liar!", the scientists at U.S. Robots were faced with a peculiar situation. They had to deal with a robot who could read their minds. In the beginning ~~all~~ of the story everyone was given a specific job as to what to do about this robot and Susan Calvin's job was to study RB-34, or Herbie, and find out what made him tick. So Susan Calvin did as she was told and Herbie read her mind and knew a secret that she had kept about a ~~secret~~ crush on Milton Ashe the Officer of U.S. Robot amp. Herbie, ~~being~~ ^{who was} unable to break the first law of hurting a human, lied to her and told her that Milton Ashe was also in love with her. Of all of the things that she could have been hiding she just had to be hiding that she was in love because, as a woman, that would only make sense. She could have been scared that she was going to be fired or a number of other things but she was hiding an emotion, to keep her strong appearance as a respected doctor, she was masculinized (Bartter 409). Because for her to show that she even has emotions was not something that she could do. "Some of the woman peered through the layer of doctorhood. 'I am not what you would call – attractive'" (Asimov 103).

And yet another stereotype comes in ~~as~~ after Susan Calvin learns of Milton's "feelings for her" she begins to wear makeup as if she needed it. She felt that after finding out the Milton liked

her she needed to wear makeup as if that would cause him to like her more. Nowadays women are expected to dress up, to wear ~~on~~ makeup, and to almost always look presentable for men, never is it okay for a women to dress up and look good just for herself. ~~Now~~ her coworkers

noticed that she was wearing makeup and Milton even said that she was a sight but the idea of her being in love was crazy to him. “ ‘I can't put my finger on it. It's the way she talks – as if she were happy about something.’ He thought a little, and then shrugged. The other allowed himself a leer, which, for a scientist past fifty, was not a bad job, ‘Maybe she's in love.’ Ashe allowed his eyes to close again, ‘You're nuts, Bogie. You go speak to Herbie [...]’ ” (Asimov 107). So on top

of not being able to show feelings for fear of being looked down upon as just a emotional woman, Dr. Susan Calvin was not able to wear makeup for no reason.

It is not easy for women, it never has been and it never will be, and Dr. Susan Calvin experienced that firsthand. She had to hide her emotions to stay a respected figure in her field and amongst her peers, and she was called a robot for doing so. She was unable to just wear makeup at work without there being something “wrong” with her, and because of all these things she did not even consider herself to be attractive. Dr. Susan Calvin faced inequality head on and came out strong, because in all honesty she did not need a man, she got to where she was on her own and because she wanted to be there.

Since this is 4 lines it may need to be an indented quote. You'll have to check for sure tho

not very hopeful... :)

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