Pubmedia Social Sciences and Humanities Volume: 2, Number 3, 2025, *Page*: 1-5

The Analysis of Setting In Isaac Asimov's "I, Robot" and "Foundation"

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DOI:
https://doi.org/10.47134/pssh.v2i3.359
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Received: 24-11-2024
Accepted: 24-12-2024
Published: 25-01-2025

Abstract: This article examines the setting features in two key works by Isaac Asimov "I, Robot" and "Foundation". It explores how the setting influences character development and the development of central themes in the works, such as moral dilemmas, the ethics of artificial intelligence, problems of civilization survival, and the role of knowledge. In "I, Robot" the focus is on the relationship of humans and robots within an already existing society, while in Foundation the large-scale galactic setting serves as a backdrop for analyzing political and historical processes.

Keywords: Isaac Asimov, I, Robot, Foundation, Setting, Artificial Intelligence, Morality, Technology, Survival Of Civilization, Philosophy, Ethics, Artificial Beings, Galactic Society, Human Relations, Futurism, Science Fiction.

Introduction

One of the 20th century's most significant authors of science fiction, Isaac Asimov, has left the world with a wealth of tales that explore the relationship between technology and humanity. In addition to being classics in the science fiction genre, his novels like "I, Robot" (1950) and "Foundation" (1951) offer a forum for examining morality, societal disintegration, the ethics of artificial intelligence, and the effects of technological progress on human existence (Hu, 2022).

"I, Robot" is a collection of related short stories about robots and how they interact with people. Earth and its colonies in a future influenced by sophisticated robotics serve as the primary settings for these stories. These locations serve as more than just backdrops for the action; they are essential to the investigation of the philosophical issues raised by the stories. In Asimov's reality, robots are completely assimilated into human civilization, yet the moral conundrums raised by their presence still exist.

Methodology

In the world shown in “I, Robot”, robotics has permeated every aspect of civilization and is used for anything from scientific research to household labor. Asimov envisions a future in which the well-known Three Laws of Robotics, which guarantee that robots behave in the best interests of humans, control their behavior. These environments, whether on space missions, in labs, or on space stations, frequently showcase the interaction between people and robots. The surroundings' high level of technical complexity highlights the conflict between advancement and the possible risks of technological advancement (Asimov, 1950).

The Earth-based story "Robbie," for instance, highlights the emotional connection between Gloria, a young girl, and Robbie, her robot friend. Although the scene is familiar and homely, the robot's presence of cutting-edge technology emphasizes the topic of trust and the anxiety that technology may eventually replace human interactions (Asimov, 1951).

The juxtaposition between the familiar, cozy household setting and the potentially upsetting presence of robotics shapes the story's emotional terrain (Vulpe, 2024).

Similar to this, in "Reason," a robot named QT-1 (also known as "Cutie") starts to wonder why it is there. The action takes place on a space station circling a far-off planet. The story's philosophical discussions, in which the robot rejects its human creators and follows its own logic, contrast with the cold, sterile space station. This reflects the larger theme of autonomy and self-determination in a world where technological advancements rule (Clute et al, 1993).

Isolation, both physical and emotional, is a defining feature of the settings of “I, Robot”. Many of the stories are set in cramped places where people must rely on technology to survive, such as research labs or space stations. Human dependence on machines is frequently symbolized by this restriction; this is especially true in tales like "The Evitable Conflict," in which supercomputers run the world economy and prevent war. In addition to showcasing the future's highly developed technological prowess, I, Robot's settings raise the subject of what will happen when technology starts to outstrip human control (Stableford, 2006).

”Foundation” is set on a galactic scale, in contrast to I, Robot's more personal, character-driven settings. Foundation, which is set in the far future, follows the fall of the Galactic Empire and the attempts of Hari Seldon and his supporters to save human knowledge and lead humanity through the anticipated turmoil. Although the tale is mostly set on the planet Terminus, which is home to the Foundation, the setting of “Foundation” is expansive, encompassing numerous planets and star systems (Khleifat, 2022).

“Foundation” is set in a highly ideological and political environment. In its last days, the Galactic Empire is portrayed as a rotting bureaucracy that is collapsing under its own weight (Suryadi, 2023). The world in which Foundation's protagonists live is one in which survival depends heavily on economic manipulation, political intrigue, and knowledge preservation. Founded on Terminus, the Foundation is located at the galaxy's periphery, cut

off from the Empire's core authority. The story's examination of information preservation and the cyclical character of history depends heavily on this seclusion (Fazekas, 2024).

Result and Discussion

One of the main locations in “Foundation” is the planet Terminus itself. The Foundation's scientists and thinkers work to protect humanity's knowledge and technology in this remote, desolate world. Terminus's environment highlights how brittle civilization is. The planet's distance from the busy hubs of power represents the Foundation's humble beginnings and the delicate nature of its work . The idea of survival in the face of enormous circumstances is reflected in Terminus's solitude. A new kind of civilization, one founded on knowledge and research rather than forceful politics, takes control of the world as the Foundation expands (Stableford, 2006).

In contrast, the Galactic Empire is depicted through opulent, dilapidated cities and spaceports, conveying a sense of both grandeur and deterioration. The vast metropolis of Trantor, the imperial capital, is a planet completely covered in cityscape and represents the majesty of the Empire and its ultimate demise. Echoing the main idea of psychohistory and the certainty of historical cycles, this expansive, dilapidated landscape serves as the backdrop for the novel's examination of the rise and fall of civilizations (Niyazova et al, 2023).

The conflict between the individual and the group is further explored by the setting in Foundation. The Foundation stresses the strength of knowledge and the teamwork of its members, whereas the Empire stands for centralized authority. Asimov may examine issues of society collapse, the role of science in maintaining civilization, and the interaction between historical forces and individual agency through the use of large settings (Shahzad, 2022).

Although they do so in different ways, Asimov's worries about technology, society, and humanity's future are reflected in the settings of both “I, Robot” and “Foundation”. The setting of “I, Robot” is mostly limited to Earth and its nearby colonies, and it centers on the interaction between people and robots in a technologically advanced world that is still debating the moral and ethical ramifications of those developments. The settings, which are frequently small-scale or domestic, highlight interpersonal relationships and the direct effects of technology on people's lives (Chen, 2024).

On the other hand, Foundation takes place in a massive, galaxy-wide environment. With an emphasis on political, historical, and intellectual influences, it offers a more macrocosmic outlook on the future. While “I, Robot” focuses on more immediate, personal themes relating to technology, “Foundation”'s wide settings allow Asimov to examine the cycles of history, the rise and fall of civilizations, and the preservation of knowledge (Zhang, 2022).

However, the link between technology and humans is emphasized in both settings. Technology frequently causes conflict in “I, Robot”, posing issues with control, autonomy,

and morality. Asimov's faith in the ability of intelligence and science to influence the future is reflected in “Foundation”, where technology plays a crucial role in maintaining civilization and knowledge (Akhtar, 2024).

Conclusion

The settings of “I, Robot”, and “Foundation” by Isaac Asimov are essential to comprehending the ideas and philosophical issues raised by his writings. The locations of I, Robot examine the moral conundrums and psychological effects of people's reliance on machines. The expansive galaxy settings in “Foundation” emphasize how history is cyclical and how knowledge shapes the future. The link between humans and technology is examined in both contexts, as well as how Asimov's outlook on the future combines caution and hope (Gois-Santos, 2022).

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