

Discussion Questions for “The Cage”

These discussion questions are for “The Cage” on Youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmgDB8fhITo>

1. Large Language Models (LLMs) like Chat GPT are far from “general AI.” but they have triggered a lot of discussion of general A.I., including the risks of general A.I. Do you think fears of general A.I. are sensible, or do you think they are silly?
2. Do you think that there is something “special” about human creativity that is “missing” from the writing, images, and video created by LLM A.I.? If so, do you think that general A.I. could overcome this lack?
3. Would you want to have a personal robot/A.I. assistant in your home if you could have one? Why or why not?
4. Not just in this video, but also in real life, a number of early robot creations are built to emulate human gender/sex. (i.e. Robots are built to seem either “male” or “female.”) Why do you think the robot in the video is female? Do you think it makes sense for us to build gendered robots, or not? If you had a robot servant in your home, would you prefer it to be gendered? If so, which gender would you prefer for your robot?
5. SF author and computer scientist Vernor Vinge argued that the risks A.I. pose to humanity are existential? In other words, he believed that A.I. could be a threat to the very existence of the human species. Do you think this could be true, or not? If so, what laws or rules do you think should be created governing A.I. research?
6. SF author Ted Chiang has argued that humans are likely to mistreat any general A.I. that they might someday create, because humans have a long history of mistreating their fellow humans as well other living creatures in their environment. Do you agree with him, or do you think there is any reason to expect that humans (and/or corporations) would be more compassionate toward A.I.?
7. Mark Zuckerberg recently claimed that most people wish they had more friends, and experience loneliness. He has suggested that A.I. friends could be sufficient to satisfy human needs for friendship and companionship. (Of course, those A.I. friends would also make a profit for whoever created them, such as Facebook.) What do you think—and how do you feel—about this idea?
8. Many people have observed that LLMs are already disrupting employment, and that A.I. will likely continue to eliminate the need for many workers as the power and functioning of A.I. increases. Eventually, they argue, most jobs will be automatable through A.I. This poses a serious challenge to modern societies: if there are no jobs left, our societies and economies will have to be transformed.

How do you think we should solve this problem?

9. Sam Altman (of Chat-GPT fame) has argued it is coming soon, but many computer scientists are more conservative, estimating that if it is even possible, it is decades away. What do you think: how far off is general A.I.? Is this a good thing or a bad thing?
10. Are there any jobs that you think A.I. should *not* be permitted to do? Why or why not, and if so, what jobs are you thinking of?
11. In the film, it's arguable that the main problem with the robot is that its owner didn't install the software update sent out by Company A. What do you think the filmmaker is saying about technology and safety systems?
12. Why do you think this film is titled "The Cage"?
13. Create your own question about the film, and ask your group.