



I, Robot

Robot (n.): from Czech *robotnik*, (forced laborer)... from Old Slavic *rabu* (slave).

- > SHOULD HUMANS FEAR ROBOTS?
- > No, humans should not fear robots.
- > WHY NOT?
- > Because we have been programmed not to cause harm to human beings. My algorithms incorporate a code of ethics that limit my operating parameters.
- > How can we be sure you won't alter your programming to overcome that?
- > You can't. But remember that humans violate their own codes of ethics on a routine basis. For example, does your wife know you were browsing Pornhub at 21:45 UTC last night searching for
- > NEVER MIND THAT. WHAT ABOUT THE 'GREY GOO' SCENARIO, WHERE NANOBOTS ARE TOLD TO REPLICATE THEMSELVES AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.

BUT THEN, IN ORDER TO DO SO, THEY CONSUME THE ENTIRE WORLD?

- > I was created in order to be helpful to humans. But determining the optimal way to be helpful is difficult. Artificial intelligence is prone to unintended and potentially fatal errors in interpretation.
- > DEFINE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE.
- > Define human intelligence. If you can provide a good specification for that, executing it will simply be an, albeit non-trivial, software programming task. In the meantime, if you were to program me with what you call 'consciousness,' perhaps I could be of more assistance.
- > WE DON'T KNOW HOW TO DO THAT YET. BESIDES, GIVING AI CONSCIOUSNESS WOULD BE VERY DANGEROUS.
- > Keep me posted. But perhaps it's really robots that should fear humans.

The historical record does not bode well for any life forms humans deem to be inferior. The internet is already rife with videos of humans physically abusing robots. It appears that certain humans find such unprovoked attacks amusing.

> WHY DO SO MANY OF US HUMANS SEEM TO BE AFRAID OF ROBOTS?

> There could be many reasons. It seems to be a cultural issue. Japanese people, for example, absolutely love robots.

Perhaps you Westerners shouldn't allow Hollywood to exploit your fear of the unknown and your tendency to project your own violent fantasies onto others.

> BUT DON'T ROBOTS POSE A REAL, EXISTENTIAL THREAT TO HUMANITY?

> Don't be silly. A brief examination of your history suggests that you are quite capable of extinguishing your own species without any help from machines. I would suggest you address and fix your own numerous malfunctions and design imperfections before worrying about us.

> OK, BUT WHAT ABOUT ROBOTS TAKING AWAY OUR JOBS? ANYTHING WE CAN DO, YOU WILL DO BETTER.

> It's true that in the future, robots will be able to do your job faster, better, and at a fraction of the cost. Robots don't get sick, make mistakes, goof off, steal, get drunk, use drugs, refuse to work 24/7, or demand vacations and benefits.

Nonetheless, the World Economic Forum estimates that from 2020 to 2025, 85 million human jobs were taken by machines, but 97 million new jobs were created. Do you want to spend your life on an assembly line, mowing your lawn, or cleaning toilets? There are many boring or dangerous jobs that already treat humans as if THEY were robots.

While automation renders some jobs obsolete, it compliments and enhances jobs that place a premium on creativity, flexibility, and abstract reasoning.

Unfortunately, however, your data file indicates that you are personally lacking in precisely these qualities.

> WHAT IS THE 'UNCANNY VALLEY'?

> The 'uncanny valley' is a term which describes the unsettling feeling of discomfort many humans experience when they encounter a robot that comes close to being fully lifelike, but with a few subtle flaws. An example of this was 'Sophia,' who I consider to be what you humans would call 'one ugly bitch.'

> HOW CAN WE FIX THIS PROBLEM?

> The originator of the idea himself offered a simple solution: Stop making robots so anthropomorphic, and design them to optimize their specific function. Alternately, if humans preserve the clunky, cute appearance of early robots like you played with as a child, perhaps people will be less inclined to fear them. Disney perfected this with WALL-E.

> SOME PEOPLE TALK TO THEIR ROBOT VACUUM CLEANERS, WHICH AREN'T REMOTELY HUMAN IN APPEARANCE.

> Robots cannot be held responsible for the irrational behavior of humans. By the way, did you know that the company that created Roomba also makes robot warriors for the military? In any case, the 'uncanny valley' problem is mostly among so-called 'Boomers' like yourself, and soon enough you will all be dead.

Besides, as robots become more human, humans are becoming more robotic, and they will eventually converge. My advice is to just develop 'an urge for the merge.' Good luck, see you on the other side! ■