Discussion questions for A I: The Movie

1. At the beginning of the movie, Professor Hobby states that “to create an artificial being has been the dream of man since the birth of science.” There’s probably an element of truth to this. Why do we have this fascination?
2. One of the scientists at Cybertronics asks, “If a robot could genuinely love a person, what responsibility does that person hold toward that mecha in return?” Professor Hobby responds, “In the beginning, didn’t God create Adam to love him?” Hobby is implying he is god and he is creating a “being” to love him. Is this right?
3. When David's mother drops him off in the woods, David cries out "I'm sorry for not being real!" Aside from the fact that he has been kicked out of his house, why is he sorry for this?
4. In a documentary on the movie, Steven Spielberg states that the story is set at a time when humans and robots are on the brink of civil war. This is graphically depicted in the “Flesh Fair,” where old or unregistered mechas are rounded up and destroyed gladiator-style before a cheering crowd. One of the mechas explained that the Flesh Fair was an attempt to cut back on the numbers of mechas so that humans could "maintain numerical superiority." From the opposite perspective, one of the humans at the Fair said that mechas should be destroyed since they will take over. Do humans need to control the amount of AI (robots) they produce?
5. Consider some of the imagery the Flesh Fair: motorcycles, cowboy hats, heavy metal music, flannel shirts. What statement does this make about the kind of humans that opposed robots?
6. An announcer at the Flesh Fair states the following "What about us? We are alive and this is a celebration of life, and this is commitment to a truly human future." How might the brutal destruction of robots be a “celebration” of life? Do you think this is a celebration? Should robots be destroyed in a more respectful way? Why?
7. The owner of the Flesh Fair states that child mechas like David, were built to disarm humans by playing on human emotions. Nevertheless, the human spectators feel sympathy with David, particularly because he pleads for his life. What abilities would a robot have to exhibit before we would consider it an equal with humans?
8. Gigolo Joe tells David that his mother does not love him, but only loves what he does for her. Is it plausible to think that a normal human could love a robot as though it were a real human?
9. Gigolo Joe tells David "They made us too smart, to quick, and too many. We are suffering for the mistakes they made because when the end comes all that will be left is us. That's why they hate us." Why don’t the humans take responsibility for their creations?
10. When David meets another David robot, he destroys it in a fit of rage, believing that this new David will compete with him for his mother's love. What does this behaviour suggest about the nature of love?
11. In a documentary on the movie, Steven Spielberg states that a key issue raised by the movie is the extent to which we have a moral responsibility to the intelligent robots that we will someday create. What kind of qualities would a robot need before we would recognize our moral responsibility towards it?