

Case 12: Sexbots

In the video game, *Detroit: Become Human*, a player confronts the unique world of android sex workers. The human patrons of Eden Club (home of the “sexiest androids in town”) rent an android, or androids, and do pretty much whatever they want with it and to it. Business is booming for Eden Club. “The good thing about androids is they’re up for whatever you want, you won’t get any diseases, and they won’t tell anyone. So why not go wild?”

The memories of the rented androids in this particular brothel are reset every two hours, which allows patrons to have privacy, leaving virtually no trace of a patron's actions with the sex worker androids. Although not explicitly discussed in the game, one would assume that if a patron killed a sex worker android (which happens in the storyline) that the patron would be forced to pay for damages or a replacement. Short of killing a sex android or disfiguring it such that it cannot be repaired, whatever a patron does with or to a sex android is their own business. Both male and female sex androids are found at Eden Club. And although also not portrayed in the game world in question, one can imagine that this or other clubs would have child sex androids as well, and animal sex androids, and any other type of android for which someone is willing to pay.

For many critics and supporters of prostitution, this would seem to be an idyllic solution to many of the current-day woes of the sex worker trade. As an example, there is reasonable evidence that individuals with violent sexual tendencies, especially those who want to physically harm non-consenting others for sexual gratification, are unlikely to change. Sex worker androids would allow them to carry out their predilections without harm to any individual person or persons. In this particular game, it is an open question whether or not the androids have evolved into sentience or consciousness or personhood, but the point remains that sex androids could be a solution to the moral issues associated with the oldest profession in the world—a profession which is not likely to disappear in the foreseeable future.

A sex doll brothel that opened in Paris, France, in 2018 has caused a good deal of controversy, with numerous calls for its closure from various entities, including politicians and feminist groups who claim the brothel encourages rape fantasies. Dortmund, Germany, has had a similar brothel since 2017. And products like Realbotix’s Harmony model, AI Tech’s Emma, Synthea Amatus’s Samantha, and TrueCompanion’s Roxxy might make brothels like Eden Club a reality in the very near future.

Case from the 2019 National Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl



Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>. © 2018 Robert Skipper, Robert A.

Currie, Cynthia Jones, Heather Pease, and Jane McNichol.