

Child Sexbots and Dolls Probably Aren't the Cure for Pedophilia

Shin Takagi is a pedophile. He has never acted on his impulses, he [told](#) the *Atlantic* in a recent interview, but is attracted to children.

This is a problem for Takagi. After reading the article, one senses that he feels an intense desire for minors but also believes children should be protected from people like him.

His solution was to found Trottla, a company that creates and sells life-size sex dolls of children. (I am not linking to the site for a reason. In fact, after clicking on the company's site I am genuinely concerned I'll soon have federal agents knocking on my door.)

For more than ten years, Takagi has shipped "anatomically-correct" sex dolls around the world. Some of the imitations are of children as young as five.

Takagi believes his dolls can be a cure for pedophilia—at least in terms of pedophiles not acting out on their desires—one more effective than standard treatments, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy and *gulp* chemical castration.

"We should accept that there is no way to change someone's fetishes," Takagi declared. "I am helping people express their desires, legally and ethically."

[Editor's note: It was announced [this week](#) that Congress is taking steps to ban child sex robots]

The article prompted NBC to wonder if child sex droids could soon be employed to prevent pedophilia.

“Child sex dolls are already a reality, and in the near future childlike sexbots will exist, so we have to decide what to do about this issue,” Marc Behrendt, a philosopher at ULB University in Belgium, [told](#) the network. “Do we ban them completely, or do we investigate on a small scale whether this technology could be helpful in preventing attacks?”

To some people, the idea of treating a pedophilia epidemic by giving pedophiles child robots might sound a bit strange. One might suspect that allowing pedophiles to have objects onto which they can unleash their desires could feed their lurid thoughts and encourage deviant behavior instead of discouraging it. (A few of my Christian friends like to point out that Ted Bundy [suggested](#) his road to the electric chair began with dirty magazines.) It also invites an important philosophical question: Is this what humans are intended for?

The notion that child sexbots and dolls could be a prudent solution to pedophilia makes a bit more sense, however, through the lens of postmodern philosophy, particularly Utilitarianism, Relativism, and Sensualism.

Takagi may or may not have studied philosophy, but he succinctly expressed the essence of Sensualism—a doctrine of ethics that says feeling is the lone criterion for what is good—in his interview with the *Atlantic*.

“It’s not worth living if you have to live with repressed desire,” Takagi says at one point.

It’s a line that brought to mind Oscar Wilde’s bleak observation that resisting desire is hopeless.

“The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it,” Lord Henry says in [The Picture of Dorian Gray](#). “Resist it, and your soul grows sick with longing for the things it has

forbidden to itself, with desire for what its monstrous laws have made monstrous and unlawful.” (Lord Henry is clearly a Sensualist himself, though a highly-entertaining one.)

Aristotle rejected such thinking. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he argued that *choice* was the primary quality that separated man from beast. Both creatures feel desire; both feel passion. But man can choose to act or not to act, he can restrain his passions.

“A man of defective self-restraint acts from desire but not from choice,” Aristotle [wrote](#), “and on the contrary a self-restrained man acts from choice and not from desire.”

Similarly, Relativism rests on the idea that truth emanates from within and there is no objective reality. Under such a philosophy, having sex all day with child androids is no more right or wrong than feeding hungry orphans.

If such a philosophy sounds impractical and absurd, there is a reason for that: [it is](#). But there is no doubting Relativism’s [cultural influence](#).

Still, Relativism would be an unworkable philosophy without the third item: Utilitarianism.

Under this ethic, an action is good or bad based on its outcomes or consequences. This differs sharply from the classical and Christian traditions, which found that certain traits and actions—[the Cardinal Virtues](#) of prudence, courage, temperance, and justice, for example—are intrinsically good.

Sleeping with a child sexbot would be wrong under the classical framework because it would be considered intemperate and imprudent. Under a Utilitarian framework, however, the action would be good *if* it reduced pedophilia.

Would giving pedophiles child sex dolls and androids actually reduce pedophilia? Many experts have their doubts.

“Giving child sex dolls and robots to pedophiles will do nothing but encourage harmful acts towards innocent children,” [said](#) Kathleen Richardson, Professor of Ethics and Culture of Robots and AI at De Montfort University.

Richardson was one of five experts recently quoted in legislation put forth to ban the sale of child sex dolls in the U.S., prohibitions that already exist in many countries, including the UK and Austria. Reports show that dolls in the UK are currently selling for [as much as \\$8,000](#) and more than 150 people have been charged with smuggling child sex dolls into the country, including [a former school governor and church warden](#).

I won't be running any studies to find out if child sexbots or androids reduce pedophilia. I will simply say these do not conform with the *telos* of man.

Still, a glance at the expert comments in the proposed legislation show that four of the five used Utilitarian arguments to advocate banning the sale and distribution of child sex dolls in the U.S. This, I suspect, gives an indication as to which philosophy reigns in postmodern America.