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SAVAGE LOVE  **OBJECT TRANSFERENCE**
BY DAN SAVAGE

I'm a twentysomething genetic male. I thought for a while that I might be trans, but I ended up deciding that while I hate my masculine features and like girl clothes and want to be "cute," I have no desire to be female and don't want to have breasts or a vagina. I also don't identify with a particular sexual orientation, as I don't find the concept useful. I've been with both boys and girls, and currently I'm with a trans girl. I've never been a fan of real-people pornography, but recently I've found myself indulging in trans-girl porn. Is it insensitive to have a predilection for trans girls? My girlfriend wants to get sex-reassignment surgery (SRS) in the future, and while I support her wholeheartedly and have never said anything to indicate otherwise, I think she knows that I'm happy with her current set of equipment and I don't have any desire for her to go through with SRS. I believe she resents me for this. But this isn't a relationship question. My question is more of a catchall: Is it insensitive, as a rule, to be attracted to trans (or intersex) girls? I like to think of myself as sexually progressive, and I don't want to objectify or disrespect anybody. I just think trans girls are real cuties.

Unavoidable Gender Hullabaloo

"Having a sexual preference—whether it's liking guys with red hair, tall women, sports fans, blue-eyed agender individuals, men with vaginas, or women with penises—is fine," said Parker Marie Molloy, a freelance writer and trans media activist whose writing has appeared in the New York Times and the Advocate and on Slate. "So long as the preference is not the sole reason for the attraction, so long as UGH remembers that trans people are actually human beings with a diverse range of emotions, interests, and experiences, and aren't solely defined by their transness, UGH should be able to avoid coming off as creepy." Building on Molloy's point: If the only thing you like about your current girlfriend is the fact that she's trans, you're probably guilty of objectifying her. But if her trans-girl cuteness is one of the things you find attractive about her—even if it's the thing that initially drew you to her, even if it's something you focus on during sex—you're not objectifying.

"As is the case with any sort of physical, emotional, or sexual attraction, a preference crosses over into the realm of objectification only when the person's potential love interest is reduced to a single aspect of their life," said Molloy. "So UGH's preference for trans women is only insensitive and objectifying if UGH makes it insensitive and objectifying."

Molloy is right: No one wants to be reduced to a single aspect of their life by a romantic partner or anyone else. But being objectified in short, concentrated bursts by a lover isn't a problem for most people—quite the opposite, in fact. Being objectified by someone who doesn't care about the rest of you? Most people don't find that sexy. Being briefly objectified by someone who loves the particular thing/things you bring to the table/mattress/sling and the rest of you too? Most people find that fucking sexy.

Finally, UGH, while I had Molloy on the line, I asked her to quickly address the issues of trans porn and SRS. "It's no more wrong to indulge in trans porn than it is to indulge in porn starring or created by cis people," said Molloy. "Whether UGH's favorite trans-porn outlets are stories, pictures, or drawings—or if they're videos of mainstream trans porn stars like Bailey Jay or independent queer-feminist performers like Chelsea Poe—UGH shouldn't feel ashamed. As to whether his girlfriend gets SRS, that's something that has to be up to her. Quiet resentment, guilt, and pressure to have or not have surgery should serve as signs that maybe this relationship doesn't have much of a future. I suggest that the two of them sit down and have a long talk about genitals, preferences, and deal breakers."

Follow Parker Marie Molloy on Twitter @ParkerMolloy.

If a woman writes in her Craigslist hookup ad that she is a "bigger beautiful woman," is there a polite way to press her for more specific details? How can I determine what she means by that? Or is it always inherently rude to ask a self-proclaimed BBW just how much she weighs and how big she actually is—to determine if one will be attracted to her?

Befuddled Baffled Wonderer

If we were talking about personal ads on sites where people look for relationships—Match.com, OkCupid, Gun Lovers Passions, etc.—it would indeed be rude to ask someone precisely how big she is. In that case, I would suggest going on a low-stakes, no-expectations date instead and having a look/actual human interaction. But we're not talking about a dating website, BBW, we're talking NSA hookup ads on Craigslist. We're talking about a virtual meat market. And when you're in a meat market—literally or figuratively, physically or virtually—there's nothing wrong with asking a polite, direct question about the meat on offer.

I am a bi man married to a straight woman for 10 years. We are in a wonderful GGG relationship. On a pretty regular basis, we invite others into the bedroom for fun. We have one friend who we do this with weekly. Because he is here so often, a bit of his clothing and a few other essentials are stored in our guest room. We are careful to hide our monogamish lifestyle from those who might unfairly judge us, but we figured a few pieces of clothing and a friend who "crashes" with us on the weekends wouldn't raise too many eyebrows, right? Wrong. My snooping mother-in-law found a drawer with boxers that were obviously not my size, lube, and a butt plug. Apparently that jazzed her up, and she continued to snoop so that she could "find evidence if I was cheating." She found gay pornography in our bedroom and a few ambiguous text messages. She had no reason to look in any drawers—or phones!—and I'm infuriated at the invasion of our privacy. Now she thinks her daughter is married to a closeted gay man. I want to tell her the truth, but my wife does not. MIL is religious/conservative, and she may disown my wife if she finds out our marriage is often a threesome. What's the right thing to do here?

Not In The Closet

You should tell your MIL to shove her fucking money—the inheritance your wife might lose if her mother were to disown her—up her religious/conservative ass. (I can only assume the stress about being disowned involves an inheritance, aka big money; otherwise, there is no downside to being disowned by this bitch.) But if your wife places a higher value on her mom's money than she does on her own independence and your shared right to marital privacy, NITC, then she should tell her mother that the plug and the gay porn are hers. (Shrug off the ambiguous text messages.) Lots of straight married women with 100 percent straight husbands enjoy gay porn. (Most slash fiction is written by and for straight women—why not send MIL some links?) I guess it boils down to which will be the greater torment for your MIL (and therefore likelier grounds for disinheritance): the whole truth (her daughter and bisexual SIL are sinful, nonmonogamous perverts) or the face-saving lie (her daughter being a bit of a perv).

On the Lovecast, is being kinky a sexual orientation? At savagelovecast.com.