

The Object

By Jack Rinella, April 24, 2011

It sits in the corner waiting, sometimes dozing, sometimes moving in a vain attempt to get comfortable. Mostly it is what it thought it was meant to be -- an object. On occasion, of course, it doubts the sanity of its choices. Thankfully those doubts flee at the sound of its lord and master's foot steps.

It goes by many names: thing, object, maggot, worm. Its most common appellation is "it." It began to refer to itself in that manner long before its name was acknowledged by others. It had a choice, of course, to remain some Tom, Dick or Harry, but that didn't feel right. From its deepest selfhood came the incessant voice to surrender, to be owned, to be subjugated to the will of another. "Only then," said the voice, "will it find contentment and peace."

As a most important disclaimer I want to remind each of my readers that objectification must not be allowed to slide into or become an excuse for domestic violence or spousal abuse. Without a doubt, it seriously has that potential and therefore safeguarding the relationship from abuse of any kind must be the primary obligation of both the owner and the owned.

Objectification comes only through struggle. The object (it) was conditioned, of course, to conform to society, "to become someone," to assert one's self against all negation, to maintain its independence and its freedom even in the face of frustration and in-authenticity.

It knew, though, that

'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free,
'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.
When true simplicity is gain'd,
To bow and bend we shan't be asham'd,
To turn, turn will be our delight,
Till by turning, turning we come 'round right.

The struggle is primarily within oneself. How does one define such a life? How does one express one's deepest desires? When does one become an it? How does it find the one who will understand and who will accept it as it? How can the psyche reject what is acceptable in society for such an abject and counter-cultural existence?

I began searching for object slaves in early November, 2010, after spending about a month looking at the profiles of those seeking objectification and crafting a persona called the Dark Lord, who was looking "for those who seek to surrender completely."

When I consider the 100 or so men who contacted me with any kind of seriousness, I find that six months later only four of them have persevered in their quest. Obviously, objectification is a rare desire and generally one that steadfastly remains in the realm of un-realized fantasy. But what of the four who appear sincere in their need/desire for such an existence?

It is easy to simply brush off those who seek to become an object with the derision of defective (i.e., poor) self-images, mental illness, immaturity or escapism. In fact some applicants have indeed exhibited such traits, especially the ones who sought drug-induced objectification. They are the ones who can only realize their fantasy with the crutch of recreational drugs or alcohol. They need therapy, not an owner.

Still there are those few for whom becoming an it is a sought-after goal and an act of self-actualization. In conversations with these few men I find several rationales for their actions: Yearning, Authenticity, Surrender, Polarity, Bonding and Belonging, and Intimacy.

Yearning

Yearning is "a persistent, often wistful or melancholy desire; a longing."¹ I sense such a desire in the applicant's voice. For those who "ache" for such an existence, dismissal of the idea is impossible. Time and time again they find themselves wanting to experience such abject surrender. They may, in fact, have found it in short term scenes and fleeting moments, but experiences such as these do nothing to end their desires. In most cases the experiences only amplify their desires and confirm the seekers in the rightness of their searches.

In this regard the yearning can be likened to the call of a vocation, not unlike that of one called to the religious life. It is some "inner voice" and has a decidedly religious nature to it, though many, of course, would strongly object to my use of those terms.

Authenticity

I want to be clear in this regard. The "ache" must be rooted in a strong belief that the state of objectification is authentic and that attaining it will bring authenticity into one's life. It must rise from one's soul as both a search for meaning and an irrefutable destiny. Object applicants will tell you they "have no choice," as they believe they were "born to live this way."

Not only does such a feeling rise from one's inner self, the experience of such a state, limited and short as it may be, will confirm that feeling of authenticity over and over again, leading the searcher ever more deeply into seeking deeper and deeper objectification.

Although authenticity is a fundamental requirement, there are several other states of being that accompany objectification and therefore give it meaning and increase one's desire for it. As I see it, there are six other outcomes that fuel this desire: Polarity, Service, Intensity, Altered Consciousness, Bonding and Belonging and Intimacy.

Many of these characteristics obviously exist in some way and to some degree in all human relationships. In any case, the object/owner relationship is a human one, even if the object sees itself as subhuman and the owner treats it that way. What significantly differentiates objectification from a "usual" relationship is the deep level of intensity it exhibits.

It is a concept such as "No Limits" that makes the surrender more intense than the usual marketplace variety. On the other hand, it ought to be noted that every relationship is going to have limits. In the case of the owner/object relationship, however, it seems to me that it is only the owner who has limits, a necessary fact that protects the object and allows for its more complete surrender.

As an aside I have found three broad areas that limit my ownership: I will not do things that are illegal; I will not injure the object; and I will not allow the object to become financially dependent upon me.

Polarity

Although a full explanation of the power dynamic in BDSM relationships is beyond the scope of this essay, every relationship can be seen as a power exchange of some kind. Most, of

¹ All definitions are taken from The American Heritage College Dictionary, third edition, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 1993.

course, only exhibit moderate levels of polarity, though these levels certainly vary with the activity and mental states of the participants.

What sets objectification apart is the severity of the polarity. The two participants in the relationship manifest attitudes and actions at the extremes of human behavior, i.e., the one becomes lord, the other the lord's possession. It is the domination/submission dynamic pushed to its furthest limits of total control and complete surrender.

It might be argued that such a polarity is neither attainable nor sustainable. Such considerations do not seem to deter the applicant. He is driven to seek it and to live it as fully as possible.

Service

As in many human relationships and especially in the master/slave relationship, there is a high need in the applicant to serve. This service, as I will write about further in this essay, becomes a compulsion to complete obedience, a surrendering to whatever the owner/lord desires. Service brings meaning and "place" to the object, a reason to be and purpose to live for.

Intensity

Applicants exhibit a desire for experiences that are markedly more intense than the usual. They seek to endure to the extreme, so that, for example, when they are flogged they want to be flogged into a bloody state or when they are fucked, they want the action to be forceful, even rape-like.

One notices in their desires that they are not willing to settle for more moderate activity. Instead they seek the ultimate experience, much like athletes seek to break records or thrill-seekers skydiving and roller-coasters.

Altered Consciousness

The BDSM subculture is familiar with terms such as subspace and out-of-body experiences. Social scientists call these events Altered States of Consciousness (ASC). The applicant seeks to live this ASC of objectification continuously (24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year).

Here I am at a loss for words. There is a great variety of ASCs and I can write about several of them but the feeling of "it-ness" unfortunately escapes my prose. What I can say is that those who seek objectification have a sense of what it means and know it when they enter into it. In general, though, I have only spoken with men who have had partial glimpses of this experience.

On the other hand, those experiences, as I wrote above, compel them to seek for more of the same in a deeper, more profound and more continuous way.

Bonding and Belonging

What I have experienced, at least in some way, is that the owner/object relationship encourages a close bond and a strong sense of belonging. This is another way of describing the "spatial" aspect of the relationship in that the object knows where it belongs. Such a feeling gives one a sense of security and adds to its sense of purpose and meaning. The relationship, in that sense, provides a psychic "map" for the object to locate itself in a comfortable, secure, and discernible time and place.

Any feelings of alone-ness and isolation are resolved, it would seem to me, by the very nature of the relationship. Even experiences such as isolation, incarceration, and silence become

manifestations of the relationship in that they are the direct result of the owner's actions. The object cannot forget that "my owner's chain keeps me here" or "my owner has put me in this cage."

Likewise physical activity, such as domestic or clerical service or sexual activity, is easily understood as "My owner can demand this because it belongs to him."

Intimacy

For those who feel the need to "belong," one of the greatest rewards is the intimacy that develops in the relationship, even in ones where aloofness is the usual state of the owner and separation the usual state of the object. Surrender, polarity, and intensity combine to make intimacy more thorough, more pervasive than in most other relationships. The object has agreed to hide nothing from the owner and the owner, in any case, is in the position of learning all there is to know about his possession.

How, then, is this life lived? What does it look like? What aspects of its desires are actualized in practice? In answering these questions I have to enter the realm of fantasy myself, since I have only experienced such a relationship in part and not yet fully.

A Religious Reflection

In considering a possible "picture" of an objectified life, I am struck with its similarity to asceticism, that is, "the principles and practice of an ascetic (i.e., one who renounces material comforts for austere self-discipline, especially as an act of religious devotion); self-denial and austerity; The doctrine that the ascetic life releases the soul from bondage to the body and permits union with the divine."

There are obviously two distinctions that might be noted in this reflection. The first is that the discipline, though begun with consent, becomes imposed. Secondly the "union with the divine" is instead union with a human who takes on attributes of the divine. Let me carry this reflection further.

For those who are familiar with the life of the monastery or the hermitage (they really only differ in terms of intensity) the discipline is only self-imposed in that the monk or hermit willingly submits to the discipline of the rule of the community or of the abbot, who then takes upon himself the role of authority over the monk. In more extreme situations, there are hermits² who indeed live alone but, in general, modern hermits live in a loose community of solitary cells or huts, i.e. Camaldulites and Carthusians.

The second distinction is more difficult to rationalize: the owner takes on the persona of a "god" to the object. I will note, though, that many applicants seek a superior to obey and while some have religious or ethical objections to considering the owner divine, there are some who readily do so.

There is, in fact, some theological appropriateness to this concept, if one is able to put aside commonly accepted Judaic-Christian doctrines. Gnostic and pagan faiths believe that the Divine is within every person. It is, therefore, not completely out of the realm of belief (at least for

² "Eremites, 'inhabitants of a desert', from the Greek eremos), also called anchorites, were men who fled the society of their fellow-men to dwell alone in retirement. Not all of them, however, sought so complete a solitude as to avoid absolutely any intercourse with their fellow-men. Some took a companion with them, generally a disciple; others remained close to inhabited places, from which they procured their food. From the Catholic Encyclopedia found at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07280a.htm>.

some people) that the object be called upon, or even desires, to worship the god-in-the-man to whom it has devoted his life.

That said, I see the life of the object reflected in five primary activities: Surrender; Obedience and Service; Pleasure; Silence; Worship; and Empowerment.

Surrender

The object's authenticity leads it to surrender, the first action necessary for the creation of an objectified relationship. It surrenders itself to its owner. In doing so both the object and the owner embrace the privileges, responsibilities and duties inherent in such a relationship.

Note here that after suitable discussion, negotiation and attainment of a mutually-agreed upon definition of the objectified relationship, it is the applicant who begins the relationship. (There will be more on this subject in the section on The Process.) I say it this way in order to emphasize the consensual nature of the relationship. The applicant freely offers him or herself to the owner-to-be who then accepts the gift-of-self that is offered. Thus stated there is no room for violence, capture, or force.

The object is gift. For his part, the owner must accept the gift. For each there are obligations inherent in the giving and the receiving. These obligations are manifested in the five primary activities listed above, surrender being but the first of them.

Surrender is defined as "To relinquish possession or control of to another because of demand or compulsion; to give up in favor of another." In this case we see a more exact definition of "yearning," it being so intense as to be called a "compulsion." For our use, the word "demand" is not appropriate. What is **freely** given up is control so that the object no longer "owns" itself but is owned by its controller, its new master and lord.

I would add that surrender is continuous and without hesitation or consideration. It always decides to act according to its owner's will. It demonstrates a kind of passivity that always responds to the master's requests and demands in a positive way. As I read these words it is obvious that there is a certain degree of idealism inherent in them. It is that idealism that makes true objectification "hard" to accomplish, though not so hard as to deter the effort.

Surrender naturally leads to service and obedience.

Service and Obedience

There ought to be nothing passive in the life of the object, though to put it in those terms might seem odd. In reality, if the object adds nothing to the life of its owner, possession of the object ceases to have little purpose, except perhaps as an expensive and time-consuming decoration. Therefore obedience and service are necessary attributes of objectification. It is the willingness to obey and the manifestation of obedience through service that separates the object from those who seek incarceration to satisfy their bondage/imprisonment fetish. I have had several applicants who confused bondage with objectification and mastery/ownership with the role of a jailer.

It is obedience that marks the true object. Have you ever heard of a chair refusing to let you sit on it? I think not. Second only to objectification itself, service should a primary goal of the object.

In practice, this lends itself to activities such as household chores, outside employment, and whatever the owner desires the object to do.

Pleasure

Obedience and service then lead to pleasure. On the one hand the owner should certainly receive pleasure and satisfaction from those two activities. Likewise, if they are authentic, one would expect that the object would also receive some kind of pleasure from his accomplishments, even if they are only of a psychic/spiritual nature. I see pleasure as experienced in three ways: Emotional, Sexual, and Sadomasochistic.

Emotional pleasure would be an over-all feeling of rightness, peace, contentment and a certain kind of joy. It is the type felt by couples whose relationship has grown and matured over the years. It is a love that may have exchanged its glow and romanticism for surety and happiness.

This type of pleasure is found in having one's environment ordered as one wishes

I see two other aspects of pleasure as well, though I have to admit they have as much to do with my own libido and sexual preferences as anything. The mileage of other owners will vary. I see the object as tool for my complete satisfaction in any way and at any time that I desire. As a man who is wired "alternatively" to say the least, that satisfaction is both homosexual and sadistic. Obviously there is the reality that others will differ in this approach.

Silence

As with any other possession the object waits upon its owner. In this regard it is my experience that waiting is a frequent activity. By that I mean that it just waits for directions and commands. Much time might, in fact, be simple spent "warehoused" until the owner has desire for its service. Practically, of course, it will have a daily routine set by its owner, which will mitigate both silence and inactivity.

Silence implies two characteristics of an object. First it makes no demands and secondly it offers no resistance. Silence is the manifestation of complete surrender to the will of its lord. It speaks when spoken to or when it senses the need to do so in order to more perfectly fulfill the will of its master.

That said, I feel it is important that the master engage his or her object in periodic dialogue in order to better guide the object on its path of service and obedience. In view of this I personally think that the keeping of a journal will facilitate the object's reflection on his state and growth into his own authenticity.

Worship

One of the more difficult concepts to embrace without prejudice (not that the concept of objectification isn't difficult enough) is that ownership leads to lordship and at some point lordship leads to worship: "the reverent love and devotion accorded a deity, an idol, or a sacred object. The ceremonies, prayers, or other religious forms by which this love is expressed."

Is it exactly because of its definition that worship is probably the most controversial of objectification's characteristics. In our Judaic-Christian culture it is, in no uncertain terms, viewed as idolatry and would be labeled blasphemy.

What does worship do? It recognizes and exalts the owner as its superior, offers praise and adoration to him as master, lord and god. Doing so, for those of us who feel the call to ownership, gives pleasure, confirms the depth of the relationship, and (as explained below) empowers the master in his role.

Worship, it should be noted, only works within the context of a certain kind of theology. This theology, as I see it, acknowledges the Divine nature of man and worships that Nature in him. It also recognizes that the Divine nature is equally endowed in the object. The object worships the god in its owner and therefore recognizes the god in itself.

I use the lower case in the paragraph above purposefully. I think it necessary to differentiate, though theologically it may be impossible to do so, the god in everyman from God as the absolute, un-reachable, un-knowable ground of all being.

Empowerment

If yearning is the beginning of desire for objectification, its purpose is the mutual empowerment of the two individuals in the relationship. The one empowers the other to attain his or her unique authenticity. In fact, neither can "become" without the other. There is no object without an owner and an owner is not if he or she does not own.

By consciously surrendering its energy, its personal power to the will of its owner, the object finds itself being fully itself. Likewise, with the energetic surrender of the object to its lord, the owner becomes more than he or she can ever be without the object.

In practice, empowerment takes many forms -- service, assistance, support, encouragement, added creativity, freedom from some activities in order to engage in others, etc. In this regard, the object/owner relationship especially empowers by adding emotional reinforcement to what otherwise might be mere intellectual belief structures. To "know" you are owned or that you "own" is certainly a different experience when the relationships are proven in real time actions.

To experience the feeling of serving or of being served makes the relationship, and therefore the person in the relationship, uniquely more aware of his place in the universe, one which, it is hoped, reflects the attainment of a more authentic life.

The Process

One of the issues that one faces time and again in the discussion of objectification with applicants has to do with the applicant's understanding of what our relationship will look like. The discussion is a matter of two questions, really. The first question boils down to "Where do we end up?" and the second is "How do we get there?"

As to ending up, I think that, in general, this essay describes my intent as to where the two might find themselves. I freely admit that it lacks details of schedules, activities, chores, events, finances, employment, immobilization, personal and familial relationships, and a host of other "what" and "what if" questions. I purposely omit these details because they are time, place, and person specific. When it comes to the practical, one size does not fit all.

Before objectification can take place the owner-to-be and the applicant must certainly have communicated enough about what we each wants so that they share a common idea of what objectification means in actual practice.

As for "How do we get there?" it is a process that involves discussion, experimentation, reflection on the experience, more discussion, a decision as to the next step, more experience, etc., until the process brings them either to ending the discussion or the objectification of the applicant. It needs to be a one step-at-a-time process.

I believe that the keeping of a daily journal will help facilitate full reflection on this experimenting and exploring stage. Ideally the applicant would write a minimum of 100 words (more is better) everyday. In it the object could write anything it liked as it needs to be forum for

unfettered thought. The purpose is for the applicant to document its thoughts during the trial period as an aid to reflection and subsequent decision-making.

Let it spend an evening in the dark chained to the wall in the dungeon and let that time teach it what it will. It may think it knows how it will feel but without the actual experience of being there, locked, dark and probably uncomfortable, it has only an unproven guess.

Let it spend a day at a desk working naked, chained, with a butt plug up its ass and required to fall to its knees whenever its owner *per tem* walks by. Let it suck its master whenever ordered, sleeping when it is told, eating what it is given it with no diversions of surfing, chatting, television, magazines, instant messaging, playing games, or reading email except for business.

Does it really know how it will feel? I think not. First get the experience. What's next? Let it think about it seriously. What did it like about it? What didn't it like? How did it feel?

The time spent is ONLY a trial. There must be no expectation of what will come next. The idea is to allow the new information it learns to give the applicant and the owner-to-be practical information as to their future course of action. The same applies to the owner-to-be as he or she has just a real learning curve as the applicant.

As to the consideration of part-time objectification, I try to encourage applicants to think along those lines. Only by having part-time experiences can the owner-to-be and applicant reasonably fashion what a long-term and/or full-time relationship will look like.

OK, what does part-time look like? It looks exactly like long-term, full-time objectification except that it has a clear beginning and an agreed-upon end date and time. When it ends, it is over and it goes back to being itself until further objectification is agreed upon. There is, of course, the real possibility of long-term, part-time objectification but that is a conversation that occurs after there is some part-time, short-term experience.

At some point the owner-to-be will sense a readiness on the part of the applicant to move into something more formal, a restlessness to become more of an object and less of a free agent. Likewise the owner-to-be will feel a readiness on his part to move into a clearer and more defined relationship.

Each owner-to-be will have to devise his or her own process. For my part I require the applicant to write me an initial petition, the information of which will form the basis of the first contract. Though there is no legal standing whatsoever for any of the writing produced in these exercises, I find that the act of writing and the discussion that inevitably and necessarily follows helps both partners-to-be to create a document that aptly reflects their mutual desire for objectification.

The exercise will also improve definitions and clearly state expectations so that both parties have an opportunity to better understand what the other wants and needs. Putting words down on paper clarifies one's thinking and both raises questions and provide answers that were not sufficiently covered in previous discussions.

The petition I require has three parts: that which the object-applicant desires, why it desires it, and what it will give to have its desires fulfilled.

The original desire will have already been expressed either in the applicant's journal or in their conversation. In fact the pictures they have painted for each other in describing their fantasy-future will form the first section of the petition.

The second section reveals the applicant's inner desires as well as other reasons that may have been suggested in considering objectification. Certainly I have hit upon many of them

in previous sections of this essay. Thirdly, the applicant will understand that there is a cost to its getting what it desires and in this section it will define its contribution to the relationship, again in terms already discussed.

The document itself need not be long nor detailed. An initial petition can be as short as three or four sentences, since it will only be used as the basis of a short-term contract, that is, one with a time frame of somewhere between a weekend and a month. The idea is that both the petition and the contact will progressively grow more expressive with experience in the agreed upon relationship.

I have found that contracts are best left to cover principles, fundamentals and requirements, such as virtue, integrity, and obedience. Rules, regulations, and protocols certainly have their place in these relationships but are best expressed outside of the contract. The contract forms the basis for these items, usually in an addendum that details the practical application of the principles and requirements outlined in the contract.

Keep initial contracts to a limited time-frame, as living under one will provide a great deal of fodder for discussion and point out areas that will probably need serious reconsideration. Believe me, the need for further discussion and change always rears its head when one tries to live what was previously only a hot and erotic fantasy. Trust reality to rear its ugly head and challenge all of your assumptions concerning your future together.

In Conclusion

It is obvious that the creation of a owner/object relationship is very much a work in progress and needs to be seen and attempted as such. There are few role models for such a relationship and little guidance other than that which we can glean from vaguely similar relationships.

The scenario I have painted comes out of dialogue, speculation, and my experience as a dominant man who has lived with a committed submissive partner for many years. Still I cannot claim experience in being master/lord/owner to the degree of intensity I have envisioned here. Likewise the rationales, advice, and attitudes I have managed to put on paper still remain speculative and without substantial historical and personal experience.

Nevertheless I am continuing my search for an object. This essay, in fact, is predominantly an effort to better communicate the object of my search and therefore improve my chances of finding it, whatever its name might be today.

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