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Resisting My Mother

My sexuality was shaped at an early age by the oppressions I encountered from my mother. What began as a normal attraction towards my mother segued into sexual abuse as the marriage between my parents crumbled. I remember as a little boy cheering as my mother stripteased for me and lying on the floor looking up my mother's skirt as she passed over me. As I got older, I gradually became more and more uncomfortable with what was happening. But it was when I was around 9-years-old that the abuse went into overdrive. That's when my father left home and my mother turned me into her surrogate husband. It was then that I started to resist what my mother was doing to me. And this battle has been going on ever since.

Pornography was one of the ways my mother would get me aroused and she seemed to enjoy my reaction. For example, she would buy me pornographic magazines like Playboy and Penthouse. According to her, this was necessary in order for me to learn about human sexuality. But this wasn't simply about giving me access to naked pictures of women. Rather, it was about the power to control me using pornographic images. This was evident as she insisted on looking at it herself in front of me and then showing the pictures to me in order to gauge my level of arousal. Of course, this made me very uncomfortable and I pretended that I had very little interest in them. The truth is I was very aroused by the pictures, being a heterosexual male. But it felt gross having my mother look at me while I was being turned on. Instead, I looked at them while she went out shopping. I also smuggled in my own pornography that I was able to procure through friends from school. These I would hide inside my room where she wouldn't suspect.

Erotic movies were used in much the same way as well. In Japan, it was common for foreign movies containing nudity to be shown on television during prime time. One such movie I remember in particular was *Private Lessons*, which featured the same French actress who appeared in numerous French erotic films that were also shown a lot on television at the time. *Private Lessons* was essentially a coming of age movie about an older woman who "taught" an adolescent male how to have sex. It tells the story of a 15-year-old boy who engages in voyeuristic activity, culminating in him successfully having sex with the older woman, thus transforming him into a man by the end of the movie. So as this movie was being shown on television, my mother would turn to me periodically and make suggestive comments about what was going on which would make me very uncomfortable. I would often get an erection from watching the nude scenes in the movie. In many ways, the movie paralleled what was going on in my life between me and my mother and I think this is what contributed to the overall disgust I felt inside.

Sexual teasing was another way in which my mother tried to exercise her power over me. She would often make fun of my private parts when I was in my underwear by making comments about the bulge in my pants and poking at it. This would happen almost daily as she wouldn't allow me to get dressed on my own. She would repeatedly tell me that I had no fashion sense and thus only she could ensure that I looked presentable to the world. So all during the week I had to fend her off from me before I went to school in the mornings. And even though I would tell her to

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stop doing it and would turn my body away from her, she would insist that it was done in jest and that she was my mother after all. In other words, she believed that being a mother gave her the right to do just about anything she wanted with me regardless of how I felt.

As my mother washed me all the way up until my senior year in high school, my boundaries were violated in the bathroom too. This became especially awkward once I entered puberty. She would often make comments about how big my penis was getting and that the appearance of pubic hair meant I was turning into a man. But whenever I insisted on any privacy in regards to my body, she would usually get irritated and state that since she was my mother it shouldn't matter. Eventually though, I was able to convince her that I could wash myself on my own and that it was inappropriate for her to look at my private parts. However, she would still periodically open the door to peak in and make comments. Naturally, I would get angry at her but she would either not care or get angry at me for making such a big deal about it. Additionally, she would insist on washing my hair because she believed that only she could do it properly. As a compromise, she would have me wear my swimming trunks while she came in to shampoo me. Since this would still involve bodily contact, it made me uncomfortable nonetheless. So it wasn't until my last year at home that I was able to assume complete privacy in the bathroom. But this had more to do with getting myself prepared for college. Because if it weren't for my father sending me off to college in America, my mother would surely have found a way to keep me at home indefinitely.

Likewise, going to the beach and swimming pool during the summer was just as nerve-racking for me. First of all, my mother would make me wear Speedos which made me very self-conscious. She thought regular swimming trunks looked awful because they weren't stylish enough. Then I had to apply suntan lotion to her back because she said she could not reach behind herself. Of course, she would apply it to my back as well. But what I found to be the most embarrassing of all was having to change at the public swimming pool which we frequented in Tokyo. Because rather than letting me change in the men's room, she would bring me into the corridor connecting the women's bathroom to the change area, where we would both change together. It was a dark and damp place with women walking by constantly. As she didn't like getting stared at by other Japanese women (as she was a Westerner), she would focus all her attention on me instead. This was her way of dealing with her own anxieties. Unfortunately, the best I could do to avoid this situation altogether was by waking up late, which I did by staying up late the night before. However, this did not stop us from going as it only limited the number of times we went.

Oftentimes, my mother would be so overcome by anxiety that she would make me sleep in the same bed with her at night as well. This would happen whenever I got sick or she had to deal with problems in the family, including her extended family in Denmark. As I got older, I protested and eventually it stopped. However, she would always try to reserve a room with one bed whenever we went on overseas trips. It was almost as if we were a couple on our honeymoon. I remember numerous times when the persons at the front desk gave us strange looks as we checked in. Although this would make me feel quite awkward, my mother seemed to relish it.

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She would usually have a smile plastered on her face and proudly say, "This is my son." And if there happened to be no rooms left with two beds, my mother would be especially overjoyed because then I couldn't do anything about sharing a bed with her.

But what I found even more revolting was how my mother liked to kiss me all the time, especially in the mornings to wake me up for school. She would sneak into my room and literally make out with me until I opened my eyes. I would be dreaming about kissing a girl I had a crush on at school and then wake up to see her turn into my mother before my eyes. Thus, my mother would mistakenly believe that I liked it. During waking hours though, I would avoid her kisses as much as I could. Whenever she blew kisses at me or snuck up and kissed me on the cheek or neck, I would cringe and brush her away almost by reflex. Yet, if I rebuffed her too many times, she would get upset and demand a kiss from me. So I had to strike a delicate balance. However, perhaps the most terrifying experience of all was when my mother "taught" me how to properly kiss a woman using herself as practice. She would tell me how I needed to learn the proper way to kiss a woman when I grew up. This would involve holding her too, which disgusted me.

And once my mother even made me touch her vagina. Again, I was told that this was for my own benefit. But I think it really satisfied some deep need within her to be touched by another man as she was never touched by anyone else after my father. This started with her asking me two or three times whether I wanted to touch her down there. Although I kept saying no, she insisted on it and finally took my hand under her underwear to her genital area. I must have blanked out because I don't remember feeling anything. All I remember next was my mother asking me if I was okay. Apparently, there was a strange expression on my face which made her stop. Afterwards, she apologized and said I probably wasn't ready for it yet. So as I look back on it now, I am fairly certain that I dissociated for a few moments. This was probably how I protected myself from the sexual abuse when I couldn't avoid it.

So my knowledge about sex while growing up was for the most part limited to what my mother revealed to me in secret including talks we had in private. This consisted largely of her talking about female sexuality which was warped since her views were based on her own experiences. For example, she would tell me how women didn't like sex and that only men were into it. She also told me that women liked men that had a lot of money and power. But because of her strong dislike of sexual intercourse, she never told me anything about the actual physical act. Therefore, I wrongly believed for years that sex just involved men and women being naked in close proximity to each other (like fish spawning) and first found out sometime during adolescence that sexual intercourse (of the heterosexual kind) involved penetration of the penis and the vagina. Now this may sound rather bizarre coming from a woman who behaved so sexually towards me, but I have since realized that this was how she acted out her repressed sexual needs. Moreover, as I didn't care much for these talks, I learned to cope with it by daydreaming. Because refusing to listen to my mother talk was never an option (she would get angry at me), I would just nod my head from time to time as I fantasized about something else.

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Then when I seriously began to think about having sexual intercourse with girls during puberty, I became increasingly aware of the fact that the foreskin on my penis was too narrow to be pulled back. My family had known about this since my birth, but my father believed that it would naturally loosen as I got older so nothing was ever done about it. However, I noticed no change over the years and so I finally realized that something had to be done about this defect. It was sometime during the eighth grade that I brought this up with my mother and soon thereafter she made an appointment for me to go see the doctor. After a brief consultation, the doctor recommended that I be circumcised so we went to an English-speaking specialist to have it done. As this involved surgery, I asked to be put to sleep. At first, my mother was apprehensive about it because she was worried that I might never wake up again, but I insisted on it because I did not want to be conscious while surgery was taking place. Having to go through such a complicated procedure during adolescence was bad enough, and I just wanted to get it over with as quickly as possible. Hence, I ended up getting circumcised during my summer break in order to have enough time to recuperate. I vividly remember my penis becoming swollen afterwards and it being extremely painful to urinate. A full month went by before my life returned to normal, although it took another month or two for it to heal completely. But despite having to go through such an unpleasant experience, it was worth it as my penis became fully functional.

Nevertheless, I remember my mother showing signs of jealousy towards other females as I matured into an adult. She would constantly criticize other females, saying they weren't good enough for me. They were too fat, too dumb, too dirty or too ugly. And if my tastes differed from hers in any way, she would get upset. The truth of the matter is she didn't really want me to date girls. In fact, I remember how she told me that the daughter of a friend of hers was visiting Japan one summer and that perhaps I would want to meet up with her, but then later changed her mind and said I really wouldn't be interested. In all likelihood, she didn't want me and this girl interfering with her summer vacation plans.

But during my senior year in high school, I finally found a girl who I was interested in enough to pursue. By then I had achieved the greatest degree of separation from my mother as I possibly could while still living at home. The girl's name was Lori and I met her in folk guitar class. Although I was very shy, I was able to muster enough courage to talk to her in the locker room after class (with the encouragement of another friend from class). Thus began a short romance that lasted no more than a few months. Even though we never kissed each other, we did go out drinking at bars (the Japanese weren't good at discerning the age of foreigners) and even attended a rock concert together. The first night we went out was especially significant as I remember coming home late without having telephoned my mother (as she usually required). Despite initially being worried about me, her mood quickly shifted to surprise when she learned that I had been out with a girl. This was followed by a barrage of questions about Lori and what exactly we did together that night. As I didn't want my mother intruding into my love life, I didn't give out too many details about our night out although I did take pleasure in the fact that she did not expect this from me at all and did not ultimately know what to make of it. Knowing her though, I am sure this symbolized the end of her life as she knew it as I was soon going away to college. And as for Lori, we eventually had a falling out and

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she ended up moving back to Texas before the school year was over. But this was a significant milestone for me nonetheless.

Since becoming an adult, I have found myself continually struggling to form intimate relationships with women. Because although I have become emotionally and financially independent from my parents, I still sense the undue influence of my upbringing from having been sexually abused by my mother. For example, I used to drink a lot of alcohol during my youth to help me overcome my anxieties which would then make it easier for me to approach women. I would often find myself feeling both attracted to and repulsed at the same time which was confusing to both me as well as potential mates and was a cause for much grief. This resulted in me gravitating towards women who were emotionally unavailable even though I tried my best to avoid anyone who reminded me of my mother.

So it really wasn't until I went into counseling and began to work on myself that things changed for the better. Lexapro especially gave me the wherewithal to deal with the anxieties from having relationships. And as I have been steadily making progress ever since, I feel that I am at the point in my life now where I can attract the right person with whom I can have a healthy and fulfilling relationship.

Moriji