

The cat: A Symbol of Femininity

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<Abstract>

The purpose of this study was to determine the symbolic meanings of the cats that frequently appear within the dreams and sand-pictures of clients. To decipher the symbol of the cat, I proceeded to research symbol dictionaries, encyclopedias, and articles to identify its natural characteristics and collective archetypes as well as researching myths and legends to learn its symbolic meanings. By researching the cats that appeared in the dreams of a man in his early 20s and the sand-pictures of a woman in her mid-40s, I sought to understand how this symbol affects the process of each one's individuation. The cat, like other symbols, has both positive and negative aspects. When one looks at it as a symbol of the feminine, it contains positive aspects like the spiritual instinct, fertility, richness, and healing. On the other hand, it also represents destructive and negative aspects like darkness and sorcery. The symbol is connected to the redemption of the anima, that is, the unconscious feminine in men. In the woman's case, it appeared as extended feminine aspects as well as dark mother images. Through this research, I tried to show that the cat, a symbol of the feminine, has both positive and negative aspects and those two sides need to be accepted in balanced and harmonious ways.

Keywords : symbol, cat, feminine, Bast, anima, sandplay therapy

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I. Introduction

Cats are elegant, haughty, and refined, and have a mystical femininity that has inspired worship-and taboo-for the thousands of years they have lived with humans. In that while cats place importance on a sense of fellowship with humans they have their own world at the same time. They give delicate pleasure and joy other animals fail to give (Miranda, 2008).

Cats often appear in the sand boxes of counselees and sometimes emerge in their dreams. Cats are one of the figures that tend to catch the eyes of counselees in the process of sandplay therapy. Cats are nocturnal and move as they please and are less masculine than dogs. They are like the moon rather than the sun, and they possess hidden feminine mystery rather than more open masculine power (Fontana, 1993).

Cats have a feminine mystery that represents the positive, creative, and in particular fecund aspects of femininity (Ackroyd, 1993). Cats symbolize pregnant women and are related to the moon by virtue of their feminine nature (Cooper, 1978). In addition, cats symbolize divinity across the world (Miranda, 2008). The ancient Egyptians worshiped cats and their god of cats, Bast (Miranda, 2008), and considered them to be holy like Isis, Egypt's goddess of abundance (Vries, 1976). However, cats also symbolize negative aspects such as cunning and the destructive aspects of femininity. Black cats may be related to fortune and prosperity as well as evil (Ackroyd, 1993). To the ancient Celts of Europe cats represented the god who lived underground and were related to funeral ceremonies. In medieval Christianity, cats signified Satan, darkness, sexual desire, and laziness (Cooper, 1978). Moreover, cats are associated with negative femininity such as shrewdness, betrayal, cruelty, and witches (Vries, 1976). Consequently, cats have been worshiped as a god and persecuted as a devil. In other words, like all other basic symbols, cats imply two aspects, positive and negative, at the same time (Bradway, 2001).

In analytic psychology, research on femininity has been developed based on Jung's anima and maternal archetypes. The Anima was considered to be the feminine part of one's soul (Jung, 1984) and this anima archetype was often regarded as mixed with an image of maternity (Jung, 1984). The quality of the maternity archetype is "maternal" and the magical

authority of what is feminine. He considered the maternity archetype to be something with opposite poles, that is, two aspects-positive aspects of caring, growing and creating abundance and negative aspects of dark abyss, swallowing, and killing (Jung, 1984). Erich Neumann also regarded that in the same context as the feminine principle of Jung, the two aspects of a mother of fear and a good mother and the combination of these two characteristics were the archetype of a great mother (Neumann, 1974).

When discussing feminine nature, Jung noted that, unlike men, women sought for much more wholeness rather than perfection because women pursued the overall development of such opposite things (Birkhauseer-Oeri, 2003). Accordingly, the researcher conducted a wide-ranging investigation on how cats revealed positive and negative aspects of femininity in myths, folktales, dreams of counselees, and sand boxes. This study enabled the researcher to discover both the positive and negative aspects of feminine characteristics that are symbolized by cats, and as a result found an opportunity to look at the feminine wholeness and integrate it.

II. Natural Characteristics of Cats

Cats are nocturnal and solitary hunters. They wait motionlessly for their prey to draw closer and then approach silently to catch them. They are seasonal breeders who breed two to three times per year and ovulation occurs 24 hours after mating. Their pregnancy period is about 65 days and they give birth to four to six babies at a time. Their body temperature is 37 to 39 degrees, slightly higher than that of humans. Therefore, they are sensitive to coldness and highly intelligent among animals (www.doopedia.co.kr).

Cats have good vision and therefore it is convenient for them to do activities at night. Even when they look dozy, they may swiftly identify the shape of an object meeting their eyes (<http://encykorea.aks.ac.kr>). Cat's eyes are bright and see things well even at night (Vries, 1976). Traditionally people thought that on a dark night, when humans could not see well, the moonlight reflected on cats' eyes. This is a kind of feminine consciousness (von Franz, 1999).

Cats are also very strong. They survive serious accidents and rarely suffer injuries. Even when they fall from a high place, they can land lightly. Cats have a tenacious hold on life. Cats have always survived difficult things (von Franz, 1999).

Furthermore, the researcher should mention the independence of cats. Dogs are animals that want to be touched and treated nicely by humans. They are very obedient to humans. If dogs are abandoned most of them will die or at least become miserable. On the other hand, cats will survive in the wild more easily. Cats are very independent (von Franz, 1999). The fact that so many feral cats are living in cities seems to prove their independence.

Cats also have negative characteristics, however. In many folktales “cats have strong retaliatory spirit and if something does not follow the cat’s order, the cat kills it by biting it.” There is even a story of “an old cat which eats humans.” (Rhi, 2011, p. 90). Cats were imagined as “Mystical creatures crawling and roaming in an out of the way place in a dark night.” (Rhi, 2011, p. 90) Cats have a habit of roaming at night and as a result they became the symbol of the moon and darkness. Today black cats are a symbol of luck but in the past they were related to magic and therefore they were often associated with wizards (Miranda, 2008).

Cats are not social animals. They do not live in a group and are solitary hunters. The reason why they are considered a two-faced deceptive animal is that they eat mice after first toying with them for sport. In fact, a cat can be seen emerging under the feet of Judas Iscariot as a symbol of betrayal in the famous painting by Leonardo de Vinci that depicts the Last Supper of Jesus and the Twelve Apostles (Impelluso, 2004).

III. Femininity of Cats Appearing in Myths

There are myths about cats in different countries. Bast, the cat goddess of Egypt, was known as the guardian deity of the city of Bubastis. She was the goddess of fecundity and abundance and a very positive archetype. In folk festivals and music, cats are related to abundance (von Franz, 1999). The sistrum held by Bast is the musical instrument of Isis and was always related to cats, and Bast was always considered very musical. For example, during

the Bast festival female performers would sail a boat down the Nile River and then turn around, hold up their skirts and show their buttocks to the crowds that were clapping and applauding on the riverbanks. To them it was a kind of play expressing their respect for Bast. Abundance, sexual rites, and even obscene behavior were all part of the Bast festival. All these revealed positive aspects, however (von Franz, 1999).

Bast was the goddess of the east but was also known as the goddess of the moon. Cats are known to have the roundest eyes when the full moon rises, further reinforcing their association with the moon. Cats, as “those which bring light” like the moon, perform the function of a rite (Neumann, 1974)

The ancient Greeks and Romans believed that cats were dedicated to Artemis, the goddess of the moon. According to their myths, Artemis, who was also the goddess of hunting, transformed herself into a cat in order to evade Typhon, a frightening giant with a hundred arms that resembled snakes (Impelluso, 2004). This is related to the agility of cats that can evade something well, in other words, independence and autonomy. Artemis symbolized freedom and at the feet of her idols there was often a cat (Cooper, 1978).



Figure 1. Bast holding a sistrum with the right hand and a shield with the left hand.

(<http://180pet.tistory.com/135>)

Artemis was a virgin goddess related to abundance, having affinity with nature and was the goddess in charge of childbirth (von Franz, 1999). Artemis-the Greco-Roman goddess of hunting and the moon-was the personification of an autonomous woman. The archetype shown by Artemis makes one move toward the goal decided by oneself in an area selected by oneself (Bolen, 1984). Artemis seems to be related to independent femininity rather than the typical femininity of a good wife and wise mother. Von Franz noted, "Cats are much related to independent individuality of something feminine." (von Franz, 1999, p.113)



Figure 2. An Egyptian cat.
(<http://180pet.tistory.com/135>)

In the myth, Artemis was fused with Hecate and had the nickname of Ecate. Ecate means hitting a target from a long distance and represents excellent power (Jung, 1985). Artemis as a female hunter is the pregnant woman and frightening motherhood goddess who tears apart and kills Actaeon against her will. Thus, Artemis includes positive and negative aspects of femininity.

Hecate was also transformed into a cat. Hecate was a goddess with the bodies of three divinities-the goddess of the moon, the goddess of the earth, the goddess of the underground. With her combined powers she exerted her power in heaven, on the Earth, and under the sea and was believed to bestow wealth and luck. Hecate is a frightening mother who triggers the evil aspects of the feminine: witches, madness and possession (von Franz,

1999). Hecate appears as a demon, vampire, or feminine monster that feeds on humans. She is the mother of all male and female magicians and the guardian goddess of mediums. She is a wild female hunter who travels every night (Jung, 1985). Hecate therefore possessed both the positive and negative aspects of women.

Freya, the goddess of richness among the ancient Germanic peoples, was said to have married the sun and two cats pulled her carriage. She was known as the goddess of love, beauty, and richness who shed tears for her lost husband that turned into gold (von Franz, 1999). Nevertheless, she was also a witch (Vries, 1976). The demonic and occult aspects of cats were not revealed until the Christian era and they were related to the patriarchal system that intended to expel feminine shadows (von Franz, 1999).

The femininity of cats in myths has positive aspects of reproduction, abundance, vitality, and healing as well as dark aspects of darkness, witches, frenzy, and destruction. We should know these dark aspects of cats as well as their brighter aspects. Sibylle Birkhäuser clearly expressed such a need:

If women do not know their dark aspect, in other words, shadow, this means disintegration from their instinct. In addition, it may be men's feminine part, in other words, anima. In this case, woman's image is disintegrated. It is divided into bright and more mental form and dark and impulsive aspect. Many folktales show that the image of woman is divided into bright part and dark part. This is a truth of heart and soul and in particular such division is noticeable in our society of paternal authority today. If there is such division, it triggers a result that women cannot live as whole women, in other words, as themselves. Therefore Neumann extremely expressed that all women of modern era were neurotic (Birkhäuser-Oeri, 2003, p.61).

IV. Femininity of Cats Appearing in Folktales

The folktales of *Jorinde & Joringel* and *Rapunzel* are two examples of stories imbued with the femininity of cats. The tale of *Jorinde & Joringel* starts with a description of a great witch living alone in an old castle in the woods. The witch transforms herself into a cat or an owl during the day and reverts to human form at night. In addition, she hunts wild animals

and birds in order to cook them. That the witch in *Jorinde & Joringel* changes into a cat by day means that feminine divinity is related to cats (Birkhauseer-Oeri, 2003). Bast also was associated with the moon and the witch in *Jorinde & Joringel* assumed the form of a cat until the moon appeared. The cat associated with the moon symbolizes a primitive and feminine heart (Birkhauseer-Oeri, 2003). Erich Neumann noted "The concept of the moon was obviously related to characteristics of maternal authority." (Neumann, 1974, p.343) The transformation of a witch into a cat is a dark aspect of great maternity. Owing to cats' cruelty in dealing with mice and birds, they are a symbol that is appropriate for primitive feminine existence (Birkhauseer-Oeri, 2003).

In the folktale *Rapunzel* cats emerge in a song by a witch. There was a man and his wife who had no child. Eventually she became pregnant and wanted to eat lettuce from a garden owned by the witch and so her husband stole some. On his second visit to the garden the husband was caught by the witch. As punishment, the witch kidnapped the couple's baby daughter Rapunzel as soon as she was born and confined her to a high tower. Many years later a prince saw the witch climb up her tower by using the girl's extremely long hair. He climbed the same way and met Rapunzel. Afterwards, the crafty witch cut off Rapunzel's hair and banished her into the wilderness and had the prince climb up the tower on the girl's shorn hair. The witch sneered at him: "Ah, it's you. You came here to take your lovely wife? However, the beautiful bird no more comes to the nest and sings any song. The cat snatched the bird. She will scratch your eyes as well. Rapunzel has disappeared. You will not see Rapunzel any longer!" Rapunzel is depicted by the witch as a bird that was captured by the cat while singing a song.

The image of a bird is a symbol of spirituality. Therefore it signifies some spirituality that should have been connected to the ground but was not. Instead it was swallowed by a cat, a symbol of a primitive and feminine spirit. Here, the cat corresponds to a woman's cruel and cold aspects (Birkhauseer-Oeri, 2003).

The origin of "swallowing" in fairy tales may be found in the Greek myth of Chronos, a giant who swallowed his child. Chronos was warned by his father that he would be killed by his son. For such reason, Chronos ate every son born to his wife Rhea. Eventually

Rhea tricked Chronos into swallowing a stone that was wrapped in swaddling clothes instead of their son and so saved the baby (Lee, 2014). In the story of Rapunzel as well, the bird was swallowed by the cat and thereby symbolized “the coming of age ceremony characterized by being eaten, surviving death, and revival.” (Rhi, 2011, p. 142) Swallowing is not a real death but a process we have to pass through in our life in order to move on to a better stage. In other words, it means a new birth (Lee, 2014). Threat by dark maternity and swallowing means rebirth one should go through for growth.

Dark maternity often tends to confinement and constraint. The aspect of a woman’s shadow often reveals the tendency to confine others, just as Rapunzel was confined like a prisoner in the witch’s tower (Birkhauseer-Oeri, 2003). The cats that appear in *Jorinde & Joringel and Rapunzel* symbolize witches as well as primitive and negative femininity, while the birds in these tales symbolize a captured anima not connected to human nature. Ultimately, the capture of the bird by the witch represents a process to overcome in the development of femininity. It is captured by the cat, the form of dark maternity, and sometimes swallowed and thus saved to move toward the development of totality.

The Cat: A Tale of Feminine Redemption by Marie-Louise von Franz, famous for her research on Romanian folktales, displays a deep understanding of the femininity of cats in these stories. In one such tale the daughter of an empress is cursed by the mother of a god and changes into a cat when she becomes 17 years old. Later the cat is changed back into a beautiful woman again by a young hero. In this folktale, the cat is not an animal transformed from a witch but the cursed daughter of an empress.

The cursed girl had become a cat and this cat was a new form of femininity (von Franz, 1999). Von Franz also talks about salvaging something feminine through the cat and it means the “divinity of something feminine and divine and dignified aspect of something physical.” (von Franz, 1999, p. 184). If the girl had not changed into a cat, she would have married at a young age and thereby conformed to a conventional pattern of life. However, because she changed into a cat, it became an opportunity for her to develop an independent personality and she was able to experience genuine individualization.

In *Jorinde & Joringel, Rapunzel*, and the Romanian folktale discussed, the cat symbolized

dark maternity and independence and the divinity of women. In particular, von Franz analyzed the cat in the Romanian folktale as a symbol of potential totality. In terms of male psychology the cat symbolizes integration with the anima, and in female circumstances it is the move toward female totality (von Franz, 1999). In the case of men it is not the condition of being captivated by anima's fantasy but to move toward genuine relationships, and in the case of women it is not the narrow-minded feminine form required by the collective consciousness, but the move toward the stage of individuation and independence living as the self.

V. Cats in Dreams

Yeong-ho began to receive treatment two years ago. He had suffered from suicidal thoughts while studying in Japan last year and so he returned to Korea. He said that he wanted to become a transsexual. His parents felt their son's depression was serious and objected to his becoming a transsexual and so they recommended that he receive treatment. At an early stage Yeong-ho said that he wanted revenge on his parents by becoming a woman.

I began to lie from the time when I attempted suicide in my early 20s. I did not talk about what I wanted and in order to protect myself I did not reveal my weaknesses. In fact, I wanted to live a better life rather than a smooth life. I wanted to live comfortably in the woods. I often imagine the cat which appeared in my dream once. It is a place like a hut surrounded by the woods. There is a rocking chair. I sit in the chair and lay a white cat on my knees and put a book on the spot. I wish I could stay there forever.

Thereafter the counselee talked a lot about cats and one day he adopted a white cat, which was the same as the one that appeared in his dream. The name of the cat was Hayangi (literally, "the white thing" in Korean). Spending time with the cat, he felt much better. Jung said, "Through active meditation, one was able to discover an archetype." (Jung, 1984, p.76) The counselee discovered the archetype of the cat that appeared in his dream through active meditation. The archetype is not only the image itself but also dynamics (Jung, 1984). The counselee experienced dynamics as well as the image itself. The middle world of projection of

images connects the concrete world we body forth and the archetypal world. One can body forth the archetype through imagination. The reason is that amorphous energies are transformed into the creation of a piece of the concrete world. Through imagination in a concrete world, one makes ones' experiences abstract and provides forms to original images. When energies change like this through imagination, an attitude to impose moral responsibility to individuals plays a noticeable role (Ammann, 2001). Like this the counselee experienced positive change of his energy through imagination.

Von Franz said, "The white cat was a healer and carer. It destroyed evil, removed anxiety, and strengthened people's recovering power. The tail of the white cat was widely used to heal the blind" (von Franz, 1999, p.104). Yeong-ho's feminine aspects denied by his family would have been complemented by the white cat. In folklore and folktales, the white cat is the emancipator of those oppressed and the helper of the poor or underprivileged young. The white cat utilizes its clever and crafty aspects in order to destroy dark forces and bring wealth, power, and fame (von Franz, 1999). Yeong-ho may have proclaimed that he would become a transsexual using his crafty and clever aspects in order to recover his oppressed femininity.

The woods are related to the physical unconscious, in particular. In Jung's paper "The Spirit Mercurius", the woods are related to the psychophysical area of the spirit. Largely, the woods are related to plants. As he pointed out, plants were created from inorganic substances, which were the first form of life. Therefore, they largely symbolize the plant area of spirit. Inorganic substances are dissolved through the materialization process of the body, in other words, what we call psychophysical things. Here, we cannot say something is completely mental and other things are completely material. There is a middle area almost unexplored yet. You gradually form your body and grow (von Franz, 1999).

Yeong-ho's dream that he was with a white cat in the woods may symbolize that Yeong-ho whose femininity and whose contact with his subconscious was denied at last contacting his femininity in his subconscious. However, he tried to realize his anima physically as well as within his subconscious. The body is a subconscious aspect and trying to realize femininity physically meant that he was obsessed with his unconscious impulses. Yeong-ho's instincts for independence and autonomy should be respected. But if they are ignored, and an

attempt to control them is made, the cat's destructive aspect appears and a desire to "scratch" (harm) his body will remain.

During the treatment, Yeong-ho's depressive symptoms considerably decreased and he adapted himself to his environment. When his father, who at first was opposed to raising Hayangi, came to like the cat, he was very pleased. When his father said "Hayangi, come here and sit" he felt that his father loved him. Hayangi was the symbol of Yeong-ho's anima and he was pleased to see his anima loved. In the past his femininity had always been denied by his father, a lawyer and former prosecutor at the Seoul District Public Prosecutors' Office, and his mother, who was brought up in a medical family. Yeong-ho, who liked paintings and poetry, was not accommodated and only studying was demanded. Moreover, his elder sister became a doctor and, witnessing her being accommodated and loved as a result, he came to deny his aspects and jealously desired to become a woman himself.

A man with the anima of a divine cat or a man with the anima of a divine bear or deer falls in love with fantasy and being attracted. Such animals are attractive. What is divine is mystical and numinous (*numinosum*) and is always attractive. It means a man is overwhelmed and fascinated by what is feminine. However, it means that he cannot have a personal relationship with what is feminine. He is too much overwhelmed and attracted and therefore cannot have a genuine relationship. He worships women or chases them (von Franz, 1999). Yeong-ho thus had not enjoyed personal relationships with women, but he was overwhelmed and attracted by what was feminine and therefore felt jealous of women and decorated himself like a woman.

Through the analysis, Yeong-ho came to accommodate his feminine aspects and met and fell in love with a woman while rearing Hayangi and lived with her. Later he joined the army. In Yeong-ho's home, where only the patriarchal and masculine survived, an enormous uproar occurred and finally femininity, which had been excluded, was accommodated and the individuation process toward Yeong-ho's totality, which had been thus far oppressed, was able to proceed.

Healing natural maternity is the principle of love. Eros as connectivity or relationship is the principle of maternity, in other words, the principle of unconscious. It connects humans

with each other and also connects them with themselves. Eros is revealed when meeting the part of the soul not yet known in relationships with other people (Birkhauseer-Oeri, 2003). Yeong-ho, by connecting with his anima, cured his masculinity through eros with his girlfriend and was finally able to move forward his totality.

VI. Cases Where Cats Appeared in a Sand Box

In January 2014, following a year of therapy, cats appeared in the sandbox of Su-jin, a 46-year-old woman. At the time she was divorced from her husband and six months had passed since their divorce. It was during the process of overcoming her anxiety and grief from the divorce that a black cat first appeared.



Figure 3. Sand picture #1

This sand picture shows a pair of European women in traditional clothes who are standing and talking, while beside the woman in the blue dress a black cat has appeared. Su-jin needed to contact her femininity with different appearances and as femininity within the unconscious a black cat seems to have appeared. As noted earlier, a black cat symbolizes cunning or destructive aspects. The black cat which appeared in the sand box is Bast. The juxtaposition of Bast with the woman in the blue dress may mean that the divinity of a goddess to fight and win against dark reality is needed.

Bast was the god in charge of the fertility of women who gave birth to life. In contrast to dogs, cats never sold their souls to humans. Cats have a kind of self-centered domain. Cats in the dreams of women are often feminine and independent and an image of something naturally full of conviction, which is something very lacking in modern women. It is the very reason why a cat goddess appears as a positive model of feminine behavior in the dreams of women. Cats are not barbarians. They do not reveal any masculine images. They are feminine and at the same time very firm and same as cats themselves (Boa, 1988). Now in a reality where she had to live as a woman, and at the same time as a mother and head of her household, she urgently needed an image of an abundant, divine, and independent goddess.



Figure 4. Sand picture #2

In the next sandbox a cat also appeared. About one year had passed since Su-jin had submitted her divorce papers and her first son was having a hard time due to problems at school.

In front of a Korean traditional house, a gray cat and a red brown cat are looking in the same direction. “Those in the middle are women and men who learn and practice traditional martial arts (the code of Silla chivalry). This is like a temple and here people learn martial arts, do labor, and train the mind and the body”, she explained. It seemed that she needed training in order to overcome and pull through her difficulties resulting from the divorce. The two cats that look like they are coming from the T-shaped traditional house may symbolize her self-recognized femininity. Femininity that previously had existed as a shadow in

the unconsciousness was made into consciousness and revealed from the self.

The witch in the folktale *Jorinde & Joringel*, which was discussed earlier, transformed herself into an owl and a cat in the daytime. In this sandbox, there is an owl atop one of the traditional houses and a cat in front of it. This owl and cat may be considered as a dark maternity form of an old, worn style. As a maternity form to block the development of the son, it is related to an aspect restricting, confining, and shutting up the son.

And in July, the cat appeared again in Su-jin's sand box.



Figure 5. Sand picture #3

In this sand picture there are a girl and boy waiting for a meal at the round table and a woman preparing a meal. Next to a chair that looks like a space for the woman, a black and white cat is looking at the table. Around this time, Su-jin was suffering from anxiety and depression. Whenever she thought “I do not have a protector”, depression overcame her. Su-jin, in the process of overcoming it, decided to become a good mother in a tough environment. In the sand box, there is a round table that resembles a mandala, three chairs, and three people. There is also a cat. Thus there were four lives represented in the sand box.

Jung said, “Three are never the expression of natural totality and compared to this, four represents the minimal number prescribing judgment of totality. Four means something feminine, maternal, and physical and three means masculine, paternal, and mental.” (Jung, 1991, p.39) Therefore the cat fulfilled what is maternal and physically lacking as a mother.

The black cat with white stripes seems to both represent femininity in unconsciousness and femininity in consciousness. On the other hand, the cat with stripes is black. In another aspect, a black cat means a separation from negative maternity and from a mother who overprotects her. Su-jin needed to be conscious that she may bind her children with negative maternity.

During sandplay, the archetypal figures originate from a distant place in the mental world. They represent very dark or very bright qualities of the soul. Therefore, when they emerge in sandplay, they emit divine or mystic power. The content of an archetype has power and may be the most essential among the quality of a certain soul (Turner, 2005). The cats that appeared in the sandplay were mystical figures with divine power. And they acted as mysterious powers in Su-jin's life, triggering integration between positivity and negativity and enabling her to move toward the development of totality.

VII. Conclusion

The researcher read a book titled *The Cat: A Tale of Feminine Redemption* during her research on the symbolism of cats that often appeared in her counselees' sandboxes and dreams. The researcher was deeply impressed by the dream of her male counselee who was receiving treatment and she wondered whether the white cat that appeared in the dream of this man, who wanted to become a transsexual, heralded the redemption of his internal femininity. Studying cats' positivity and negativity as a therapist, the researcher became all the more convinced that the symbol of the cat was related to the redemption of something feminine.

Yeong-ho, the counselee who had inspired his therapist to study more deeply the symbol of the cat, finally accepted his masculinity through the redemption of something feminine. Around the time that the researcher completed this symbol paper, the counselee also finished his treatment and said "It seems that I don't necessarily need to be a transsexual."

Thereafter he joined the army and exerted his masculine leadership in the recruit training center, a male group. Looking at younger soldiers who called him "elder brother" he found that his confidence, masculinity, and gender identity were all the more solidified. He was full of energy and said the training that everyone else felt was difficult was a challenging task

for him that he enjoyed. He is now working at a district office and spending every day energetically.

The positive anima in Yeong-ho makes his life attractive whereas the man who does not have any contact with his anima is dry, inactive, intelligent, and too dead-alive. Von Franz said that "Everything which inspired him or attracted him resulted from positive anima." (von Franz, 1999, p. 210) It is the reason why when he has a negative relationship with his anima, he becomes depressed, does not find pleasure in anything, and criticizes everything. It is that negative anima has come out. He has no contact with his cat (von Franz, 1999).

When the cat figure first appeared in Su-jin's sandbox, her femininity began to develop and in particular it revealed the process of positive maternity. At the same time, however, it emerged as a form that confined and shut up her children's independence as dark maternity. While proceeding with the treatment, Su-jin enjoyed music, food, and festivals. Moreover, through involvement in her church community, she found pleasure in spiritual activities. Thus positive femininity, namely the cat figure, inspired life and made life attractive. While cats have negative and dark maternal images as well as positive divinity and femininity, sandplay therapy gave the counselee an opportunity to accommodate the two aspects of her inside at the same time.

Jung said, "An archetype is a quality which is pure and true and makes humans speak and behave." (Jung, 1984, p. 75) Exploring the symbolism of the cats that appeared in the dreams of the counselees and in their sandboxes, the researcher understood that an archetype was a quality that made one speak and behave. The emergence of an archetype was strong and it made one behave.

Dora M. Kalff noted, "Happiness of the outside and the inside exists as simultaneous events. What appeared together with symbols makes events of the inside and the outside occur together. This provides the next step for human development." (Turner, 2005, p. 340) Jung as well noted, "Essentially an archetype has a tendency to reveal itself through simultaneous arrangement encompassing both sides of the material and the mind." (Jung, 1964, p. 493) The counselees' inside happiness occurred simultaneously with their outside happiness and the symbol also affected their therapist, the researcher. The analytical process of the counselees led the

researcher to study images in dreams, myths, folktales, and symbols. At the same time, this symbol acted as a therapeutic archetype to the researcher as well.

As a therapist, the researcher participated in the process of understanding symbols and was affected through symbolic materials. It also became a therapeutic archetype. Probably such things will occur between a counselee and a therapist, whether they are conscious of it or not. However, while writing this symbol paper, such experience was verified. And through this process, the researcher came to know and appreciate the value of symbols all the more.

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