

## A Case Study of Male Adolescent's Trauma from Incestuous Sexual Abuse and Sandplay Therapy

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### <Abstract>

This study has been analyzed the case of a male adolescent having trauma of sexual assault from his biological father in his early stage of development. It has been investigated that incest sexual assault had especially influenced toward the masculinity of a male adolescent having trauma. Sand play therapy has proceeded for two & half years and the patient has built 18 sand boxes out of 97 sessions. 64th session was family session with the father of the patient and 73rd to 76th sessions were family ones with the mother of the patient. This research has been through analyzing 11 meaningful sand boxes out of 18 and introduced the significant dreams of the patient. By this process, sand play therapy has proved its outstanding process so to reveal, disclose, and heal the suppressed in-depth unconscious.

*Keywords* : sandplay therapy, masculinity, sexually abused adolescent, incestuous sexual abuse

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## I . Introduction

Only a handful of case studies have been conducted on the incestuous sexual abuse of young and adolescent boys, despite the severe outcomes of the abuse. This does not mean that the problem is uncommon. The underrepresentation stems from the fact that incestuous sexual abuse is located in a domain that often can hardly be recalled to the conscious world by the victims, and also because the terminology itself and act are regarded as so repulsive and uncomfortable that one cannot openly speak about (Han et al., 2008). Boys were less likely than girls to report sexual abuse because of the fear of retribution, the social stigma against homosexual behavior, the desire to appear self-reliant, and the concern about loss of independence following disclosure. Sexual abuse of boys appears to be underreported and underrecognized, and therefore the victims are undertreated (Holmes, W. C. & Slap, G. B., 1998). A collusion of silence retains the secret and therefore may adversely affect the victims (Rudd & Herzberger, 1999; Kendall-Tacket et al., 1993; Kelly et al., 2002). It is also commonly known that a victim of sexual abuse can sometimes become the perpetrator. In the case that there was no physical assault by the father in the absence of active resistance by the child, the victim can be stigmatized as a conspirator of the crime (de Young, 1982).

How to define sexual abuse when dealing with the subject of an abuse by a same sex parent can be controversial from a cultural aspect. Physical contacts made between a father and a son as an expression of affection are not categorized as sexual. The definition of child sexual abuse provided by Kim (2002) is as follows: "When an assailant who is older than a child aged below 14, who is emotionally, cognitively and sexually immature, makes a sexual act for his or her sexual pleasure (exposure, harassment, intercourse, and rape), demands such an act from the child (exposure, sexual contact, sexual exploitation), or neglects the child in a sexual environment." Because children are "helpless" beings that depend on adults unconditionally, a discussion on whether the sexual act was conducted under an "agreement" or "coercion" is meaningless in this kind of situation. Plus, through their sexual experience the children are "tamed" to express their affection and love in a sexual way. Since the decision to perpetrate sexual behavior is made by adults, no matter what the response from the victim, the responsibility for the matter solely belongs to adults (Kim, 2002).

Almost all studies in South Korea that focused on the incestuous sexual abuse against children and its long-term adverse effect speak of the aftereffects in relation to physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and sexual developments. While many of these studies concentrated on female child abuse by the father, it would still be meaningful to explore related damages. Incestuous sexual abuse has both short- and long-term adverse effects on the victim (Rudd & Herzberger, 1999), some of which include a decline in communication and problem-solving skills (Johnson, 1989), runaway and involvement with delinquent activities (McCormack, 1986), and difficulty of forming attachment relationships up to adulthood (Alexander et al., 1998). Among the reported responses by incest victims are anger, shame, emotional turmoil (Kelly et al., 2002), parentification, sexual behaviors (Sanders, 2000), revictimization (Aleers et al., 1992), self-blame, and breaking away from the past (Spaccarelli, 1994).

A few existing studies on boy victims of sexual abuse, though not incestuous, report that boy victims are sometimes perceived as the perpetrator due to some of their common reactions: confusion over sexual identity, inappropriate attempts to reassert masculinity, and recapitulation of the victimizing experience (Roger & Terry, 1984). A study by Shrier and Johnson (1988) on male adolescents molested by men found that members of the study group identified themselves as currently homosexual nearly seven times as often and bisexual nearly six times as often as the control group. Another study found that some of these victims are homophobic (Sebold, 1987). Other related studies reported that boy victims of sexual assault manifest aggressive behaviors (Darves-Bornoz et al., 1998), have trouble with self-regulation (Friedrich, 1995), experience eating disorder (Chandy et al., 1997), and develop a poor body-image (Sebold, 1987).

The use of sand and symbolic figures in sandplay therapy allows inner aspects in the human unconscious to be expressed, makes the unconscious become conscious, facilitates the union of the conscious and the unconscious, strengthens the ego, and heals problem behavior (Kalff, 2003). Pain experienced in the early stages of development can lead to a lack of ego-strength, which can result in apathy and regression to childhood. In these cases, putting the Self at the center in sandplay therapy can help them restore life order and life meaning

(Turner, 2005/2009). Moreover, the free and protected space provided by the therapist enables clients to regress to the emotions and experiences of the childhood (Winter, 1999), which means that sandplay therapy is effective in treating problem behavior related to childhood life and experiences. Sandplay therapy is especially effective for problem child and adolescent, as the process involves resolving inner psychological issues and re-constructing the ego (Jang, 2013).

Adolescents are in a transitional phase between boyhood/girlhood and adulthood. Boys and girls go through certain rites of passage to become men and women, respectively. Jung asserted that one must go through a process of trial to become an individual and also needs to become psychologically separated from the parent in order to reach his or her genuine Self (Jung, 1984/2002). Psychological separation from the mother is especially important at a stage when ego-consciousness grows and develops. Jung explained that “the total nature of men mentally or physically presupposes femininity and men’s system is transcendently focused on women.”(Jung, 1984/2004, p. 87) Hence, “masculine development includes the femininity of unconsciousness, that is, Anima development, and Anima development is very important for masculine development” (Jung, 1984/2002).

Erich Neumann, an analytical psychologist who was a student of Jung, explained that becoming an adult is a process of coming out of the family and entering into the world. Adolescence is a period of rebirth. Neumann used the myth of a hero slaying the dragon as a metaphor for this process. He described the development of the masculine as escaping from the slavery of the Great Mother, or compared it to the myth of a hero fighting against a dragon. Through this process the boy identifies himself with the father and achieves masculine development (Neumann, 2004/2007). During the initial stage, the ego begins to overcome the dependence upon the matriarchate. This produces a reaction on the part of the conscious ego to identify itself with the masculine energy. When this process is met with a wound or a delay, the conscious ego becomes permanently dominated by the feminine. Neumann saw this as failing to make a transition from the matriarchate to the patriarchate, or failing to make a transition from the unconscious state to the state of fully developed consciousness (Neumann, 1973). As we can see, the role of not only the mother but also the father is highly important in the development of the masculine.

This is true also for the development of the ego in adolescence. Failing to successfully obtain the feminine psyche from the fight against the dragon and consequentially remaining in the primitive cycle can bring about negative effects like neurosis. This self-limitation brings a lack of relationship with the women and also with mankind, a process known in analytical psychology as crystallization of the Anima from the mother archetype (Neumann, 2004/2007).

Through the sandplay case of a male adolescent incest victim whose development of the masculine was interrupted by the traumatic event, this study observed how the adolescent's masculine becomes restored and develops through sandplay therapy. This study was centered on the theories of Jung and Neumann. Neumann in particular distinguished different stages of ego development manifested in the process of sandplay therapy, of which the research made use of to categorize and interpret the case.

## II. Case overview

### 1. Client Information

The client (aged 18) was around 176 centimeters tall and looked like an average high school student. He lacked confidence, in terms of his looks and ability, to the point that he hardly made an eye contact with the therapist. During his first meeting with the therapist, the client held his head down for a while until he finally asked, "Do I look weird?" He had a high level of anxiety. The client was in his first year at a special-purpose and had been refusing to go to school since summer vacation. "I want to take a break. I want to die. I don't know for what I was born. I resent my parent." His parents therefore decided that he needed therapy.

### 2. Chief Complaint and Case Background

The chief complaints reported by the client in his first session were confusion over his sexual identity, interpersonal anxiety, and obsessive hand-washing behavior. The client was the

second child of two children, a daughter and a son. Because both of his parents worked full time, his primary caregiver was an old nanny. He was sent to a daycare center before the age of one but could not adapt to his new environment and therefore was again taken care of by the nanny. The client's mother reported her job as a nurse kept her very busy and away from home, and that the client mostly watched English language-based videos at home while she was working. Even when he reached a certain age the client did not talk and make responses to people, and so he was taken to the hospital to have examinations at the recommendation of his daycare center teacher. But the client had no developmental problems. The client had never been a talkative person all his life and hardly ever expressed himself. He usually hung out with only one or two friends, and liked to play the piano more than sports. He had rather a feminine inclination. When the client entered high school, his peers told him that he is "like a girl." One of his classmates even wrote "You faggot" on his Facebook wall, which shocked him. The client talked about his having a crisis with regard to his sexual identity, which was related to a sexual trauma involving the father.

The client remembered-though he could not recall his exact age—him asking his father to touch his genitals since at a very young age until he was about nine. An analysis of his dream during the therapy led to the assumption that the touching started when he was three. Sometimes, the client would touch his father's genitals as well. The client felt a tremendous amount of guilt with regard to this memory. "I asked my dad to touch my genitals, so this must be my fault." Up until elementary school, the client had good relationship with his male friends and felt attracted to his female friends. But since watching a homosexual pornography in middle school, he no longer felt the desire to have a girlfriend. The client reported of his difficulties in interpersonal relations with his male friends. "I don't have many friends. I have about one or two, but I'm not so close to them either."

The client started sandplay therapy during the summer vacation of his first year in high school. His obsession became more severe since he entered his second year. He was not only unable to use the public transportation but also uncomfortable with using the chairs at school that he would have to put a tissue on the seat before sitting down. Because of the obsession he became extremely nervous whenever he had to move between classes for different

lessons. His obsessive behavior became worse as therapy was in progress, probably because his negative emotions could no longer be repressed.

### 3. Family Background

The client's father worked at a leading conglomerate in Korea where many of the employees were graduates of prestigious university. The father felt an immense sense of inferiority toward his coworkers and therefore often pressurized his children to receive admissions to top universities in the country. The father did not grow up in an affluent home; he was a self-made man. He had a tendency to express extreme anger and hostility toward those who do not appreciate what he had achieved in life. He was especially strict about the children's school grades: When the client as a young boy skipped cram school, his father severely reprimanded him and even beat him. The father had bought a house in front of the Seoul National University-the top university in Korea-and told his children that the family will move to that house once the children enters the school. The client had received good grades up to middle school and remained confident of himself. But after the client entered a special-purpose high school with a highly competitive environment and his grades began to drop, he lost the means to verify his existence.

The client's mother was too busy to provide the client with good-enough protection and care. She faced difficulties in forming an intimate relationship with her children, and pushed them for the sake of satisfying her own needs. The mother had unresolved childhood anger, lacked empathy, and had a "bad relationship" with her husband.

The client's main caregiver was his older sister, who was three years older than he was. She, too, was under a lot of stress about school grades. Unlike the client, his sister often expressed her emotions outwardly. She was filled with anger at her mother's neglect and her inability to form relationships. The client also received a lot of stress from his sister, but it remained mostly repressed because she was literally the only one who took care of him.

#### 4. Case Conceptualization

The client complained of school maladjustment, obsession, and sexual identity crisis. These problems were related to his early psychological trauma. During client's early childhood, his mother did not provide protection and care and his father abused him sexually. However the client believed that the abuse was his father's way of expressing his affection. He believed that he was responsible for what had happened and was caught in guilt. The mother's lack of emotional expressions and accepting attitude contributed to the client's repressing his negative emotions. Plus, the father was very strict about the client's school grades and often exploded, and then would quickly apologize for his outbursts. All of these factors contributed to the client's low self-esteem as well as built-up anger and depression. And his severe obsessive behavior came about through the continuation of silence and repression, which are commonly manifested by male child and adolescent victims of an incest. The client had maintained his self-esteem by maintaining high grades during his middle school years but failing to do so in high school worsened his maladaptation problem. The client needed to become aware of and express his psychological trauma-the primary reason for his inner anxiety and sexual identity crisis-in order to strengthen his ego. He also needed to separate psychologically from his parents to develop his ego and to differentiate his masculine. It should be noted that this case study was disclosed after gaining prior consent from the client and his mother, in accordance with basic ethical guidelines that a therapist must follow.

### III. Sandplay therapy process

The client had 97 therapy sessions over a period of around 2.5 years, during which he made 18 sandpictures. At the beginning, a 10-minute talk with the mother was held after each session. There were, in total, 30 sessions involving the mother. There were also in-between family sessions: Session 64 was done together with the father, and sessions 73-76 were done together with the mother. The following sections show sessions during which noteworthy

conversations, sandpicture scenes and dreams took place, in a chronological order. The sandpictures were categorized and analyzed according to Neumann's stages of ego development.

### 1. First Stage of Ego Development: The Phallic-Chthonian Stage (Sessions 1-7)

Neumann's first stage of ego development is the phallic-chthonian stage. The ego is still connected to the Great Mother as the Self. The unconscious is dominant in the psychological matriarchate; the conscious is not yet independent (Neumann, 1973). In this stage, the state of paradise inside the womb is portrayed as omnipotence and helplessness (Turner, 2005/ 2009).

The client had an interview-like session with the therapist during their first meeting. Then during his second session with the therapist the client made the following first sandpicture.



Figure 1. Sandpicture 1 (Session 2)

Characteristics of the phallic-chthonian stage as explained by Neumann could be seen in the client's first sandpicture. The grassy area in the left rear corner with plant and animal figures looks like a paradise. The animal figures are phallic in shape. Neumann mentioned that, animal companions of the Great Mother-which usually appear phallic in shape-in myths can be observed in this stage. The mummy, pyramid, and cross placed at the right side of the sandtray symbolize death and at the same time suggests helplessness (Neumann, 1973).

After finishing his sandpicture, the client first talked about the pyramid: "I chose the pyramid because I've never been there..." On the right side of the tray are a mummy, a pyramid, and Jesus Christ crucified on a cross. All three figures represent the death of a king. The first stage of masculine development is the King (Moore & Gillete, 1991/1997). The grave of the king represents the death of all masculine. In other words, the boy is in a fixed state of helplessness. At the same time, the rebirth symbolism of the grave could represent the possible rebirth of the masculine. There is a stained glass in front of Jesus Christ. The shattered experience lie bare in front of Christ as an unavoidable pain. The client confessed that he could not go to church because the visit would always make him feel guilty. The presence of a cross in sandpictures usually indicate that clients are experiencing the psychological equivalent of crucifixion. Here crucifixion means psychological suspension between irreconcilable drives and values, resulting in prolonged emotional anguish (Weinrib, 2004).

There are four figures placed on top of a wooden bench located in the front part of the sandtray. On the left is a Western man whom the client called "Mozart," on the right is a cookie man, and at the center are a boy and a girl. Mozart grew up under a negative father who interrupted his growth. His father's obsession made him sexually dissolute. The Mozart figure represents the sexual confusion, obsession, and the shadow aspect which is instinctive, emotional and even dissolute. The client said that he put the cookie man in because it looked delicious. During therapy the client always said, "I'm hungry." "Hunger," representing a psychological starvation, is a key symbol of pain (Turner, 2005/2009). The cookie man is actually the fairy tale character gingerbread man who, in the story, escapes from various pursuers. It represents the client's wanting to escape from his outer reality and his fear from the internal truth.

At the center of the bench is an interesting pair of a boy and a girl. The girl is Jessie from the *Toy Story*<sup>1)</sup> film series. Jessie in the movie is a cowgirl and a tomboy. This figure could represent the client's potential Anima. An assumption can be made that the Anima energy that Jessie represents, who was abandoned by her original owner but nevertheless is very cheerful, is fortunately within the client. The boy next to Jessie is from a Japanese

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1) A 1995 American computer-animated buddy comedy adventure film produced by Pixar Animation Studios for Walt Disney Pictures.

manga and animation titled "Chibi Maruko-chan," the Korean rendering of which is "Maruko is 9 years old." The boy in the story has a shy personality. The figure is funny-looking and looks rather discouraged. The boy's image is very similar to that of the client, who has a poor self-image due to the incestuous sexual abuse he had received until the age of 9.

Sitting on the chair is a pirate with a very big head in comparison to the body. Pirates steal what belongs to others, especially treasures. Treasures represent the Self found within the depths of the unconscious. The client must bring back the treasure from this pirate. This one-eyed pirate is a symbol of overly inflated masculine and can represent the negative father-*imago*. The pirate's oversized head is related to the thinking function, or, in other words, the client's being focused more on his academic work rather than his inner desires. The headscarf means that he will not think about how the distorted expression of affection (touching his penis) will be a wounding experience. The bandana represents the state of "not being able to see" (Cooper, 1978/1994). What further supports the symbolism of bandana is the pirate's blind left eye. Despite the fact that in normal vision we usually integrate the images that the right and left eyes see, we could say that the left eye is the eye that is connected to emotions, an eye connected to the unconscious (Bradway, 2001). The pirate who stole the treasure shows an aspect of man who does not have an eye that is connected to the unconscious, emotions, and spirit. The client must integrate the stolen and deprived side of his personality.

On the left side of the sandtray is a large, squarish area of grass. A square-shaped structure represents an ego energy that needs to be developed, a static wholeness, constancy, and integration (Cooper, 1978/1994). It appeared that the client, who had unstable relationships as he did not receive proper parental care, was seeking for safety through this square. His instability led him to want protection and stability through this large, green grass patch. Color green, which is a dominant character of grass, is associated with vitality, hope, stress-coping ability, healing and yearning (Brennan, 1987).

On the grass are a pig, a panda, and a rabbit. Animals represent instinct. Pigs are a symbol of not only abundance and fertility but also greed, lust, and anger (Cooper, 1978/1994). They also represent ignorance and the unconscious (Jung, 1991/2002). Pandas

spend most of their time eating and sleeping. Rabbits easily become anxious and frightened (Kast, 1994/2007). Rabbits are associated with sexuality because of their reproductive powers and can often be found in sandpictures of sexual victims (Carey, 1999/2002). Cecil Burney said rabbits represent homosexuality (Bradway, 2001). Rabbits appear several times in this client's sandplay process. These three animals seem to represent the client's wanting to have repressed instinct and sexual issues accepted and protected. There are also a jeweled tree and a windmill on top of the grass patch. The grass area seems like a paradise. It is even protected by a fence placed in front of it.

At the center of the sandtray are a waterfall, a house, and two bridges. A bigger bridge figure is placed in front of the tray and a smaller bridge runs across the middle of the waterfall figure. Two polarities are connected by the smaller bridge. The word waterfall is a combination of two words, "water" and "fall." The word "fall" means to drop, descend or to become corrupted. It is symbolic of the lost paradise (Ackroyd, 1993/1997). The cascading water can represent the descent of the libido or the descent into the unconscious together with the loss of the paradise. The client will be able to enter the path toward the Self only by descending into the unconscious and become aware of his inner energies, though the process will be painful.

The left side of the tray, or the unconscious side, represents the fallen paradise, and the right side of the tray represents the loss and the death of the king. As mentioned before, there is a small bridge going across the waterfall figure. It is encouraging to see that the two worlds separated by the waterfall are connected by this bridge, though the small size may suggest a weak connection. There is a house at the bottom of the bridge. Looking at the house, the client said, "My dad bought a house in front of Seoul National University, hoping that we would be admitted to that school." The house seems to represent the ideal the client must reach and his persona. The higher the ideal, the greater the helplessness of the ego.

Placed in front of that house figure is the larger bridge. The presence of the bridge suggests that two things must be connected, although the tray has yet to show what those two things are. It was interesting to note that, to the therapist the beach chair and the long bench also looked like a bridge to some extent.

The client often used a communication program called "LINE" and always talked about it. The name "LINE" was intended to represent the meaning of connection. The bridges and his mentioning LINE seemed to represent his hope to become connected with the world, and also the need for him to become connected with his inner world in the future.

The first sandtray indicated that the client will go through the difficult journey of going down into the unconscious, integrating his shadows and Anima, and gain back his stolen treasure, or his Self. His wounds from early sexual abuse must come to the surface and be viewed from a different light in order for him to become connected with his split ego and to live life as who he is. Only then will the client find peace and stability.



Figure 2. Sandpicture 2 (Session 3)

The client created his second sandpicture a week after creating his first sandpicture. Upon entering the therapy room, the client claimed with much excitement that his class will go on a field trip the week after and that he is looking forward to getting along with his peers. The client placed a large whale figure inside the sandtray and continued to stroke it as he continued talking. "Whales are innocent," said the client. "They remind me of circumcision.<sup>2)</sup>" Hearing that remark, the therapist had an image of a hand stroking a penis. The whale seemed to indicate that the masculine energy was emerging from the deep sea of the unconscious (Kalff, 2000/2012). The whale is a representation of the mother or the general feminine. A hero being swallowed by a whale in a myth symbolizes going deep into the unconscious, which may appear as terribly frightening. By descending into the unconscious,

2) Korean euphemism for circumcision is the "whale hunt."

clients can discover their true Self, which is normally represented by jewels or other types of treasures. The whale, the therapist thought, symbolized the need for the sexually repressed client to go inside his unconscious so as to find his true Self. He was still in a state of helplessness, seized by the unconscious.

In the left near corner of the tray is the lotus. The lotus represents a container of the principle of feminine acceptance. Grown out of water, the lotus connects to the sun, or the masculine. The grass field, which contained instinct and life in the first sandpicture, appears in the second sandpicture as the lotus of feminine principle that contains animal instincts: a duck, a swan and a penguin. An association with the matriarchal paradise can be made with regard to this scene.

## 2. Second Stage of Ego Development: The Magic-Phallic Stage (Sessions 8-42)

The magical ego in the second stage of ego development differentiates from the Self and is inflationary, for it exceeds the objective limits of experience and action, which do not yet exist for it (Neumann, 1973). The inflated ego appears in a magical, mythical form. The Shrek figure in this session can be considered an inflated ego. But the ego appearing in this stage still remains unconscious, having mythical, magical qualities.



Figure 3. Sandpicture 4 (Session 8)

The client reported that he did not get along with his classmates during the field

trip. In fact he felt uncomfortable as he felt that a girl seemed to hate him. Since the trip, the number of hand-washing increased; he said that he had washed his hands up to 30 times at school. During this session, the client repeatedly said, "Shoot. I don't like it." Inside the sandtray are Shrek, a piano, and a bed. Shrek is an ugly green ogre. After saving Princess Fiona, who is locked in a castle tower guarded by lava and a dragon, he marries her. Although Shrek is an ugly beast who lives in a swamp and loves taking mud baths, he is, at the same time, "prince charming" who kills the dragon, kisses Princess Fiona and breaks her curse in the story. This fantasy story is in sync with other fairy tales that represents the freeing of the Anima, or the process of healing. While Shrek as a big beast symbolizes the inflated, ugly and inferior ego, he is also the hero aspect of the client that will free the Anima and achieve healing. At the center of this sandpicture is the Statue of Liberty, the color of which is green. The client's Anima, at this point in time, appears in the form of an inanimate object instead of a living woman. The color green, which symbolizes healing, suggests that she symbolizes the Anima that will be activated in the future.

The three figures in the left near corner seem to represent the client's family relationship, which has not been differentiated at all. In front of the family, the client placed a striped bed in a slanted position. The color combination of the bed-blue and white-is similar to the beach chair the pirate was sitting on in the first sandpicture. The bed is where the client was sexually abused by his father. The bed suggests that there is a "family secret." At this point in time, the mother was not yet aware of the secret sexual relationship between her son and her husband.



Figure 4. Sandpicture 10 (Session 26)

A clown, which represents client's confusion and chaos over the masculine, appears in the form of feminine masks in his fourth sandpicture. The client will be able to break away from his interpersonal anxiety and obsessive behaviors only when he overcomes the negative father imago. We continuously see the sandpictures representing the feminine in his unconscious related to the sexual abuse, that is, his pain over the loss of his Anima.

During session 26, the client explained about a sliding door at the back of the classroom. He said that his classmates often use that door to enter and exit the room, which would make him feel anxious and uncomfortable. He added that he experiences anxiety and difficulty in breathing when using public transportation, and that everything feels filthy. As a result, his hand-washing behavior became worse. Four figures were placed in the shape of a square in his tenth sandpicture. The client still seemed to seek for safety amid his anxiety and pain. The client often said, "I don't have memories of my childhood." He probably sought for a safe haven by repressing his uncomfortable childhood memories. After finishing the picture, the client said, "I take the lead. This white house is a mental hospital. There is this one mental hospital in this peaceful place. I put the fish in because I want to be free."

Jeju Island is the southernmost and largest island isolated from the Korean peninsula, created by a volcanic eruption. The island has two opposite meanings: a place of isolation and solitude, and a safe haven from the sea of chaos (Cooper, 1978/1994). The island reflects client's isolation and loneliness stemming from his maladjustment to school, and also expresses his desire to be safe from the chaos of the unconscious. At the center of the sandtray is a dol hareubang<sup>3)</sup>, a stone figure representing Jeju Island. Literally meaning "stone grandfather," dol hareubangs are carved from porous basalt and traditionally were placed outside of gates for protection against outside evils. The presence of this figure seems to represent the client's hope of being protected from his anxiety. It is worth noting that dol hareubang is carved in a phallic shape to represent the masculine. The phallus symbolizes masculine creative principles, potentials, and the flow of life, and has the power to drive off the demons (Cooper, 1978/1994). It is also the wellspring of life and libido, and an object of worship (Jung,

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3) Dol hareubangs are large rock statues found on Jeju Island off the southern tip of South Korea. They are considered to be gods offering both protection and fertility and were placed outside of gates for protection against demons travelling between realities.

1985/2005).

The color of dol hareubang is black. The first stage of the alchemical process is nigredo, or blackening phase. The nigredo phase of the alchemical process represents the experience of darkness, which psychologically corresponds to the encounter with the shadow. Black is a primitive state that has features of the "*prima materia*" or chaos, or the "chaotic chunk" (Jung, 1985/2004). The black here is the darkness of the unconscious that will have to be observed and integrated by light in the inner world. Inside the inner world of the client, who is at a state of chaos amid darkness, is a guardian-or the dol hareubang-that represents sacredness, creativity, life force, strength and fertility and can repel evil.

To the left and right of the dol hareubang are a peaceful-looking house and a mental hospital, respectively. The mental hospital on the right represents the client's state of being ill-i.e., his obsessive behaviors-the vulnerability representing the part of the client that has been locked inside his deep unconscious and condemned as unproductive for existence (Ackroyd, 1993). As for the peaceful-looking house on the left, house is a symbol of the Self. The two figures may represent an ill Self located on the side of the consciousness, and a peaceful Self on the side of the unconsciousness, respectively. In this sandtray are the materials found in the depths of the unconscious: the color black, a stone formed by lava, and water. The picture seemed to show that they are descending to the depths of the sea of the unconscious which was repressed. Beginning from the next session, or session 27, the client's obsession became more severe: He began using a tissue to pick up the figures. As the obsession became increasingly intense, the sandpictures increasingly revealed the suppressed secrets. When the world of unconsciousness locked in the dark is protected and accepted, and finally revealed at the front of consciousness, the fish, or his Self energy, will become free just as the client wanted.

### 3. Third Stage of Ego Development: The Magic-Warlike Stage (Sessions 43-65)

Neumann said it is in this stage that the ego begins to overcome its dependency on the matriarch. In this stage the initial separation of the masculine energy from the feminine



Figure 5. Sandpicture 13 (Session 43)

begins. The conscious ego moves toward the direction in which it identifies itself with the masculine energy. The ego must fight against the dragon in order to maintain itself and move (Turner, 2005/2009). The fight is represented by a fierce, magical piano battle in the client's sandpicture.

Summer vacation was over and time has come for the client, who often talked about wanting "to escape, cry and die" and regularly skipped school, to return to school. The client became more adapted to the school environment during the second semester and was determined that he would graduate from high school. "I thought that I would feel all gross in school but fortunately, that wasn't the case." He also talked about his jealousy or anger toward his friends more freely than he did before.

The client placed 8 figures in the shape of a circle at the center of the sandtray. The figures that caught the therapist's attention were not one, but two pianos. The two pianos are facing each other, like when two pianists are playing a duet. The piano formation reminded the therapist of the blue and red *taegenk*<sup>4)</sup> symbol at the center of the Korean flag. The symbol of taegeuk originates from the ancient graphical symbol (taegeukdo). Its gentle curves represent the line of life (<http://blog.daum.net/windada11/8750639>). The piano is the symbol of the Anima that brings life to the client.

The piano formation is highly similar to that in the piano battle scene in the 2007

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4) *Taegenk* is the Korean form of the Chinese term *Taiji*, or "supreme ultimate". The Korean term more specifically refers to the graphical symbol composed of interlocking spirals. The *taegenk* is commonly associated with Korean Taoism philosophical values as well as Korean shamanism.

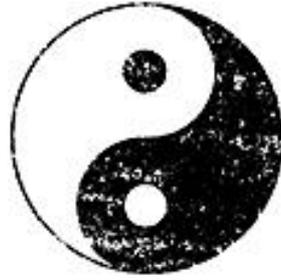


Image 1. Taegeuk

<http://blog.daum.net/colorplaying/2475140>

Taiwanese film *Secret*. The client talked about movie as he placed the figures inside the tray. In the movie, piano serves as the medium between the two main characters, Yie Xianglun and Lu Xiaoyu. Lu Xiaoyu travels forward in time to the present with the help of a piano piece called "Secret," and falls in love with Yie Xianglun, who lives in the future. The piece played during the piano battle is Chopin's "Black Key" Etude. What is interesting is that while the etude was originally made to play with the black keys only, the melodic sequence of the "Black Key" that is performed in the film includes an improvisation in which the introductory theme of the etude is transposed a half step higher and is played almost entirely on the white keys. This part of the sandpicture seemed to indicate that the secret hidden inside the darkness will soon be revealed. It appeared to show the client's strong inner conflict and that he will, through this fight, be able to break away from the darkness of the unconscious and begin walking toward the light of awareness. The client may achieve growth and becomes a hero through his victory in the fight against the unconscious. After this sandpicture, the client began to talk more with his classmates and became more comfortable in his interpersonal relations.



Picture 2. From the movie, *Secret*



looks peaceful, but it's hard to approach.” This comment indicates that while the client has the task to born out of the uroboros and enter into the world, he still has difficulty of “approaching” the task. That explains the fence that stands between the circle and the tree. The materials inside the circle still remain protected.

Pine tree is a symbol of being straight and upright, vitality, solitude, and also the phallus. The client's comment that it is “difficult to approach” the pine tree suggests that the client still faces difficulties in his outer reality. The formation of the figures in this sandpicture represents the damaged axis between the ego and the Self as explained by Edinger (1992). The axis will become connected only after the unconscious elements inside the uroboros becomes accepted. Placed on the railroad is a tank car with the words “oil can” written outside. Oil is a symbol of devotion, spiritual light, mercy, and richness. The act of applying oil is a symbol of presenting a spiritual life, god's grace as well as wisdom (Cooper, 1978/1994). These symbolisms suggest that a new life and energy has been instilled into the client, who is now connected to the path toward growth.



Image 3. Uroboros  
(<https://ko.wikipedia.org>)

Toward the end of this session, the client confessed something that he has kept inside himself for a long time: “I imagine having sex with this older guy whom I like.” It seemed that the client had wanted to tell the therapist for a long time but could not because of the guilt he had felt. Through the sandpicture created in session 48, the therapist could feel that

the time of transformation has come. The figures protected by the black railroad, the circular railroad, and the pine tree stirred up a feeling of awe inside the therapist.

The next week, during session 49, the client said something that greatly chocked the therapist: He had been sexually abused by his father as a child. The client confided that his father had touched his genitals until he was in the second grade. "I even asked him to touch my genitals. I think I touched his [genitals] as well... I'm not sure how old I was, but I think it was up until when I was nine, when I was in the second grade. I asked him to touch mine [genitals] for me, so it's all my fault." The therapist told the client that such behavior on the part of the parent is a sexual abuse, and that it is not the client's fault but his father's fault. The client seemed relieved to hear that.

During session 50, the client said, "When returning home after our last conversation, I became angry."

During session 51, the client reported a dream about turtles. "The turtles were swimming. There were about 10 of them, and I was watching them swim." The client said he had had over 20 dreams for the past week. Being able to travel both land and water, the turtle is the mediator between the conscious and the unconscious.

Before coming to session 52, the client again had an interesting dream. "I was on the basement floor. Maybe it was a parking lot. But there were no cars. There was a door on the left upper corner. I thought it was a door to the stairs, but there were no stairs connected to it. I think I went down by riding on an elevator. There was a light on the left wall and seven cylindrical pillars. They looked like those pillars that you'd normally see in a basement parking lot. I could clearly see numbers written on each one of the pillar: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9." After listening to the dream, the therapist realized that the sexual abuse at home started when the client was aged 3 until he was 9, for a total of 7 years. The client, unconscious but clearly, told exactly when the sexual abuse had occurred. The experience, which was concealed in the dark basement floor, was clearly marked on the columns-which connect the earth and the underworld-that brought the memory to consciousness. It also became evident that the client must overcome this trauma in order to carry out his developmental tasks and achieve wholeness.

Before coming to session 63, the client told his mother about the father's sexual abuse. After the session was over, the therapist talked about this issue with the mother. While shocked, the mother nevertheless calmly accepted the truth and agreed that her husband needed therapy. And at the request of the client, session 64 was conducted in the form of a family therapy together with the father. During this session, the father said that he wanted to apologize to the client and sobbed. He atoned for what he had done. "I'm very sorry. It's not your fault. It is all my fault. I had no idea that those behaviors would hurt you so much." The client nodded and accepted his father's apology.

The father's apology was a highly meaningful and helpful for the client. Breaking away from the negative influence of the mother archetype and developing the masculine requires a positive relationship with the father. But because the father's sexual abuse, the client had trouble developing his masculine. However, the father's recognition of his faults as well as his active participation in therapy had a positive impact on the client and made the therapy successful.

#### 4. Fourth Stage of Ego Development: The Solar-Warlike Stage (Sessions 66-85)

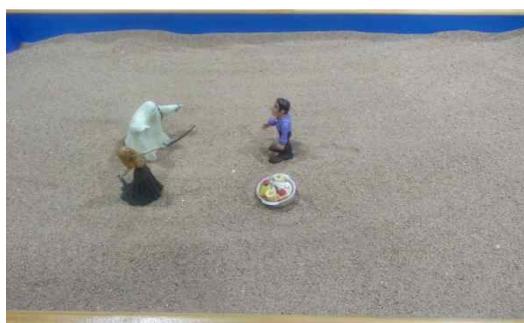


Figure 7. Sandpicture 15 (Session 66)

In this stage, ego resistance against the feminine principles becomes stronger. This tendency toward resistance is intensified by men's support of each other within male groups and the identification with the masculine and the father rather than matriarchal elements

(Neumann, 1973). After having a therapy session with his father, the client felt less guilty, was able to relieve a great deal of his anger, and became more expressive of his emotions. In session 66, the client said that the older guy whom he mentioned before was accepted to the department of physical education at a local university. The confusion surrounding homosexuality became manifested in this sandpicture. He described the ghost figures in the tray as “a ghost that brings about a sexual identity confusion.” “Once you meet this ghost, you become a homosexual. And the woman holding a sword is the girlfriend [of the male figure]. Maybe she’s trying to stop the man from becoming a homosexual.”

Ghost is a primitive figure and an expression of the unconscious complex. This complex in men is the mother archetype and the feminine component of a man’s psyche, or the Anima. The witch figure is the White Witch in *The Chronicles of Narnia*<sup>6)</sup> film series. The sword is her feared weapon with which she can turn enemies to stone. The sword is pointed at the man figure, attempting to turn the homosexual drives to stone. The scene represents the client’s inner battle: the unconscious conflict or struggle between wanting to break away from homosexuality and wanting to remain unchanged.

Eating ice cream symbolizes the joy of having the “frozen” psychic energy or emotion moving freely about. The banana is a sexual symbol that represents a man’s penis or masculine energy in the form of the phallus (Ackroyd, 1993/1997). Overcoming the three conflicts implied by the ghost and witch figures suggests the resolution of the previously petrified sexual conflicts, which allows the psychic energy to flow freely. This picture seemed to indicate that the conflict indeed opened a door to the client’s wholeness.

Dora Kalff argued that the square or the unit of four appears in the sand tray when the clients’ psychic wholeness develops. She explained that the appearance of the square indicates the freshly blooming drive of the psyche for order. She also said that angular placement of figures represent more masculine energy relative to a circular placement (Turner, 2005/2009). The masculine energy that will bring order in the inner world is beginning to develop. Two weeks after creating sandpicture 15, the client played with “dirty” board games

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6) A series of fantasy films from Walden Media, based on *The Chronicles of Narnia*, a series of novels by C. S. Lewis.

in the therapy room, becoming completely freed from his obsession. Sessions 73 through 76 were held in the form of a family therapy together with the mother, during which she cried, hugged the client and said, "Even if you become a homosexual, I love you. And God also loves you no matter who you are." While the client felt a bit awkward, he learned to accept that his mother loves him and felt relieved by her comments.



Figure 8. Sandpicture 16 (Session 77)

The client picked up the volcano and put it in the tray as a symbol of his anger, saying "I created a path of fury. A world has appeared: the world of comfortableness." This suggested that the client's fury, or anger, had been connected with his childhood frustration relating to his sexual experience, which gave him a feeling of comfort. The aerial view of the volcano provides an image of the sun. It appears that by connecting with his emotions, the client was able to connect his childhood with the sun, or the masculine. In the sandpicture, client's childhood was symbolized through the slide and jungle gym figures. The characteristic of both rides is that children go up and down while playing on them. They can thus represent the "ascend" or the "descent" to his childhood. The "jungle" aspect of the jungle gym symbolizes the unconscious. The life forms inside this jungle could represent the "animal or instinctive" urge, or a suppressed feeling of guilt and anxiety (Ackroyd, 1993/1997). The bridge was put in the same direction as in sandpicture 1. Here, we can finally see what was being connected, although that knowledge was not accessible in the first place. After creating this sandpicture, the client said, "I like it."



homosexual and to engage in an intimate relationship with others.

There are two pearls and a small conch shell inside one of the scallop shells. The white pearl represents the “treasure that is difficult to obtain” and symbolizes the spirit, hope, and wisdom (Cooper, 1978/1994; de Vries, 1976). The treasure that was stolen by the pirate in the first sandtray and remained in the depths appeared in this sandpicture as the pearls. The client was able to meet the treasure of his soul which was hidden inside the scallop shell in the depths of the sea, or his Self. The conch shell, which was used as an instrument to make deep, vibrating sound in ancient times, will help client become connected with his inner sounds.

A father figure is carrying a son figure on his back, and the snow beneath their feet looks rather cozy. The client said that there probably is a “winning ticket for the LINE character event” in the mailbox.” LINE is a chat application, and the client had won the ticket to its event in his outer reality. By connecting to his repressed childhood emotions, the client was able to reach a reconciliation with his father.



Figure 10. Sandpicture 18 (Session 94)

Sandpicture 18 is the last sandpicture created by the client. A yellow Smile Man is playing a black grand piano in the center right. Now the client has more distinct Self energy and he is letting his voices and feelings be heard and seen.

The movie *Spider-Man*<sup>7)</sup> is a story about a hero named Peter Parker, who is a school outcast and bully victim. After being bitten by a genetically engineered “super spider,” Peter obtains a super power. In trying to purchase a car to impress his love interest Mary Jane,

7) A 2002 American superhero film directed by Sam Raimi.

Peter uses his superpower for the first time. The Spider-Man figures appear as if it is first sitting on a colorful container and then approaching the client. It looks as if the hero energy is going towards the client. Like Spider-Man, the client was introverted and ostracized by his peers. But in the movie, Peter becomes a hero, falls in love with a woman, and fulfills the hero's duty by defeating villains. And just like Peter, the client is also on the hero's mythological journey internally during the therapy process. The hero energy moving towards the client appears to be very dynamic. It seemed that the mummy, pyramid, and cross that represented the death of the king in the client's first sandpicture were born again as these three dynamic hero energies.

The beautiful jar made with tiles in every color resembles a kaleidoscope that forms a balanced and beautiful image as miscellaneous materials are mixed together. It symbolizes the ordering of psychic contents that is reached when all the elements of psyche have a "center" (Ackroyd, 1993/1997). Amid the long and boring therapy, the healing fragments were able to come to a "center" to represent the genuine Self, bringing order to the last sandpicture. The colorful jar is a container for the Spider-Man, representing the order of the inner world that will bring the development of masculinity and the differentiation of the ego.

Then there is Anubis. Anubis is an ancient Egyptian god who ushered souls into the afterlife. He is usually depicted as a man with the head of a jackal. It is known through an ancient tale that Anubis applied an antiseptic treatment to the body of Osiris when Osiris was killed by Set. He assisted in Osiris' revival and took responsibility for guiding the deceased when Osiris revived to rule the netherworld. In other words, Anubis is a god of the deceased who helped the king's revival. Anubis can be a symbol of helping in the birth of a new king by getting involved in the death and revival of the king: the mummy, the pyramid, and Jesus Christ that were in the client's first sandpicture.

Anubis was identified with the Greek god Hermes. They were viewed to be because they both guided souls to the afterlife. Anubis therefore was also named Hermanubis. Hermes is a conductor of souls into the afterlife and a god of transitions and boundaries, moving freely between the worlds of the mortal and divine. From a psychological viewpoint, Hermes is the mediator between the individual psyche and the unconscious (Edinger, 1994/2006). Therefore, Anubis is a symbol that retains the connection with the client's unconscious and an axis that

connects the ego and the Self, as mentioned by Edinger (1992). The client's damaged axis has been restored, and the worlds in two extremes that were previously separated by the waterfall in sandpicture 1 are now connected.

Here, a black female figure appeared on the left side of the sanitary as the client was connected to the unconscious. She is a primitive black woman with a very sensual body shape. Holding a water jar in her arm, she is facing the Spider-Man figures. Although the client commented that she "might be a transgender," this is a very attractive black woman in native clothing in reality. The water jar is a container holding a content that supplies vitality. It shows that now the Anima that is a carrier of Eros energy has appeared that will provide life-giving water to the client. The fact that she has black skin means that the Anima has not been clearly recognized yet and still remains as the shadow. However, the size of the figure is larger than the other figures over which she towers. Her size suggests that the female figure is relatively emphasized compared to others.

In his final therapy session (97<sup>th</sup>), the client talked about his dream. "A girl said that she wants to be my girlfriend. She was in her twenties. I don't remember whether I said yes or no." Even in his dream, the client's Anima is now approaching him to become unified. She will give liveliness and vitality to the client, and help him free up his personality and connect is to emotions. Both of the Anima that appeared in the final sandpicture and the one in the dream told during the final session play the role of the Anima archetype that was suggested by Jung, one which gives vitality-enhancing energy and connects consciousness and the unconscious (Jung, 1984/2002). However, it is not clear from the dream that the client is ready to be in a relationship with this girl in his dream. At that point in time, conflicts and hesitancy still remained in the client. He will need to become more intimate with his inner Anima in the future.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The case presented in this paper examined the therapy process of a male adolescent who was suffering from extreme obsession, which was attributable to his mother's poor

nurturing and his father's sexual abuse during childhood. Through sandplay therapy, the client was able to reconstruct his ego and develop his masculine. The client was struggling with problems of school phobia, a serious obsession of not being able to touch anything, difficulties in interpersonal relations, and sexual identity crisis due to his homosexual orientation.

This paper analyzed the entire 97 sessions of therapy according to Neumann's 5 stages of ego development. Sessions 1-7 represented the phallic-chthonian stage, where the ego remains passive and receptive toward the directing activity of the good mother archetype. Examples of the stage of the matriarchal unconscious as explained by Neumann are the grass field in session 2 and the lotus in session 3. The client's experiences during this stage were sometimes helpless and sometime omnipotent. The pyramid, mummy and crucified Jesus Christ in the second sandpicture represented the death of the king and also the client's state of helplessness and confusion. Sessions 8-42 represented the magic-phallic stage, where the young ego becomes activated but is still essentially determined by the mother archetype. The immature, young ego appeared in session 8 as a hero, or Shrek. Though the ego still remained inflated and inferior, it is expected to become a healing energy that will go on a hero's journey. The black, phallic-looking dol hareubang figure in session 26 had the sacred mythological theme and the sacrificial conscious that take place in this stage. It should be noted that the second stage of ego development was rather long. An interpretation for this phenomenon is that because the client's ego was too weak, it took a long time for the inner conflict to even begin. A trauma from an incestuous sexual abuse is usually deeply repressed and therefore it is difficult for the related inner conflict to take place. Sessions 43-65 can be seen as belonging to the magic-warlike stage in which the child's ego begins to overcome its dependence on the matriarch. The mandala in the piano battle sandpicture and the railroad sandpicture showed the client's intense inner conflict and struggle. In this stage, the client overcame the conflict and struggle, disclosed his childhood sexual trauma, and began to reclaim his repressed anger and anxiety. By fighting at an inner unconscious level, the client was able to reach the light of the conscious. Sessions 66-85 belonged to the solar-warlike stage. The warlike feature of this stage was represented especially in the sandpicture where the white witch held up a sword to petrify the client's homosexual drives, where he identified himself with the sun, or the masculine, and tried to break away from the dominance of the

matriarchate.

By making connections between his anger and childhood, the client began to feel more comfortable at school and with his interpersonal relations. The last stage of ego development, which is the solar-rational stage, was represented in sessions 86-97, where the symbolism of his Self (the pearl) and the symbolism of an emotional release (the excrement) were manifested. And in the very last sandpicture, the modern hero Spider-Man was dynamically moving toward the client, which suggested that the client will become connected to the masculine energy. In the same sandpicture, there was also a sensual-looking, primitive black female figure, which represented the Anima that the client will integrate in his inner world.

In relation to his chief complaints, the client had to fight against the homosexual impulses that were related to the negative father complex, which enabled him to recognize and express his feelings of anger towards his father. As the client began to embrace his emotions, he in his sandpictures went on a hero's journey in which he was able to defeat a huge dragon, or the unconscious. Through this process, the client's guilt about his homosexual interest was alleviated. This experience led to the revelation of the unconscious through dreams and the activation of his Anima, through which he was able to improve his relationships with family members and others around him. The client overcame his school phobia and as he continued to make efforts to acclimate to his school life, and he eventually completed his studies in high school. He also became more comfortable around female peers and eventually could maintain a relaxed relationship with his male best friend. Above all, his extreme obsession was almost cured, which is attributable to the process of disclosing and embracing his trauma.

The client suffered from confusion because he believed that the sexual abuse by his father was an expression of love and also suffered from guilt because he blamed himself for the occurrence of the abuse. As a result, he struggled with a negative perception of himself. As mentioned in the introduction, just as other victims of incestuous sexual abuse, the client unconsciously became a silent conspirator of the crime and suffered from sexual identity crisis, the social stigma against homosexuals, and guilt. He was affected by the aftereffects that are commonly discovered in victims of incestuous sexual abuse: low self-esteem, anxiety, anger, interpersonal difficulties, shame, self-blame, and so on. All of the above coincide with what

have been found in previous studies.

Supported by the safe and protected space of psychotherapy where emotions can be embraced and properly expressed and also by the relationship with the therapist during the sandplay therapy process, the client was liberated from his unconscious fear and wounding that had been suppressed. He also developed the ability to establish a relationship with his feminine aspect-that is, his Anima-which is essential for masculine development. Although his sexual identity crisis still persisted, a noticeable change was that he was able to naturally express his inner conflict and confusion after therapy.

Though the result of a single case cannot be generalized, the study was certainly significant as, through a long-term therapy, it possibly expanded the understanding of the unconscious world of male adolescents with traumas from an incestuous sexual abuse and explored the trauma from the viewpoint of sandplay therapy theories and analytical psychology. Through the therapy, we were able to see that the client's unconscious work in sandplay therapy, which was done in a safe and protective space with the accepting attitude of the therapist, contributed to relieving his problem behaviors.

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