Candlelight: Symbol of Consciousness in Holy, Protective Space

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<Abstract>
This study examined the symbolism of candlelight that is frequently observed in sand pictures. Candlelight represents light in the darkness of life, bright future, vitality of sun, or uncertainty and evanescence of life that can easily vanish. Birth and death of human being is compared to creation and extinction of candlelight. Candlelight that is lit at deathbed breaks darkness of death and it symbolizes the light in afterlife. As for the existing method of candlelight, it reveals its nature by burning itself. Hence, candle, which completes its existence through an encounter with flame, is an important symbol that shows birth, death, resurrection, and holiness. This study examined the symbolism of ‘candlelight’ from an aspect of analytical psychology by dividing into ‘Temenos’ as a holy protective space, ‘Initiation’ to death that is encountered at the process toward regeneration, and ‘Consciousness’ that naturally begins a noble evolution by converting unconscious characteristics of Self to be conscious. The paper analyzed the symbolism of candlelight by examining the sand pictures of client.

Keywords: candlelight, temenos, initiation, consciousness

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I. Introduction

The candlelight symbolizes birth, death, resurrection, and sacredness. It also represents the light amid the darkness of life, bright future, vitality of the sun, or uncertainty of life and transience. Candles lit at the time of death give light to the darkness of death and symbolize the light in the afterlife. Because of its symbolisms, people perform certain rituals that involve turning the candle on and off to mark birth and death: People celebrate their birthdays by blowing out a certain number of candles and, likewise, also commemorate the death by lighting and blowing out the candle during the funeral ceremony, which is usually done in Catholic- and Eastern-style funerals (Cooper, 1978).

The candlelight retains its existence burning itself. The candlelight comes to life when the candle meets the flame. As a symbol of the sun, the candlelight has both virality and dynamism of the sun. It is presumed that humans first experienced fire through natural phenomena such as volcanic eruptions and lightning. Therefore, the primitive man believed that the origin of the flame is the sky or more specifically, the sun in the sky. Because the ancient belief was that the sun is god, holding the flame sacred was equivalent to worshiping the sun-god. The ancient people also believed that it was the revelation of the heaven that the fire came to earth. Because of this belief, fire became an important means of connecting human beings and gods in religious rituals. Lighting the fire therefore can still be seen in religious ceremonies or even the Olympic Games today (Cooper, 1978).

The primitive man believed that the flame fills the energy of the cosmos and therefore held fire, or the source of life, scared. They tried to keep the fire alive day and night to obtain energy for their soul and their unconscious world through its flame, the surrogate of the sun, even after dark. The flame brings life-force into the soul and the world of unconscious (Friedman & Mitchell, 2011). With what has been said above, it can be said that the candlelight has an image of life only when it exists in the form of a flame.

Candlelight has a significant meaning in various religions. In the religious meetinghouses of Native Americans, fire was lit to mark the sacred center in which the great divine spirit lives. The Buddhist belief is that the candlelight relieves the human soul, that the
will of man ascends to the sky through the ascending, vertical light, and that humans receive the divine revelation through it. In Christianity, candlelight represents religious passion and martyrdom. It also represents the "resurrection" of Christ, with the candle symbolizing the "body" of Jesus Christ and the fire symbolizing the transformation toward an "eternal life." The tongue of fire mentioned in Acts 2:3 represent the descent of the Holy Spirit, the voice of God, and the revelation of God. In Hinduism, candlelight represents the transcendent light, knowledge, and the vitality of wisdom. In Judaism, menorah, the seven-branch lampstand of Moses, represents the presence of God (Exodus 25:31-40). The Roman-Jewish historian Flavius Josephus explained that the seven lamps of the golden menorah represent the sun, the moon and the other five classical planets; seven days of the week; the Big Dipper, and the seven cycles or powers that exist in the world. In Kavala, a city in northern Greece, people believed that three candles or a candleholder with three branches represent Sephiroth's wisdom, austerity, and beauty (Cooper, 1978). According to the ancient Jewish philosopher Philo Judaeus, Menorah represents the blessings upon all things in heaven.

Candlelight is created through the meeting between a candle and a flame. Through the meeting of the two, the candlelight contains the opposite elements of darkness and light, birth and death, and ascending and descending. This quality makes the candlelight an important symbol that connects the unconscious and the conscious. What is particularly special among these opposites is the pair of birth and death.

During the process of the sandplay therapy, clients often meet emotions connecting to birth and death through candlelight. The clients that are introduced in this paper often turned off the light in the therapy room, lit the candle, and observed at their inner worlds that came to light amid the darkness. They expressed various emotions through this experience, crying silently, crying aloud, happily staring at the sandpicture in mesmerization, or hardening the face. They confronted their unconscious in the sacred ceremony that took place through the candlelight.

This paper observes the three major symbolisms of the candlelight from the viewpoint of analytical psychology: the "temenos" or the space of divine protection, "initiation" where there is death and rebirth, and the "development of the consciousness" where the unconscious
contents come to consciousness and naturally begin to evolve. It also shows sandplay cases in which these symbolisms of the candlelight were manifested in the sandtray.

II. Characteristics of the candlelight

Candle is a light source or fuel made of wick and paraffin or wax in a solid form. The main purpose of a candle is to create fire. Whereas candles were mostly made of tallow (processed suet, or hard fat, from cattle and sheep) until the 19th century, most of them today made of paraffin.

For a candle to burn, a heat source is used to light the candle's wick, which melts and vaporizes a small amount of fuel (the wax). Once vaporized, the fuel combines with oxygen in the atmosphere to form a constant flame. This flame provides sufficient heat to keep the candle burning via a self-sustaining chain of events: the heat of the flame melts the top of the mass of solid fuel; the liquefied fuel then moves upward through the wick via capillary action; the liquefied fuel finally vaporizes to burn within the candle's flame. Candles can be seen commonly during birthday, wedding, and religious ceremonies.

In the first century in Rome, candles were made of tallow and the pith of the rush plant. The word candle comes from Latin candere, which means to glow or shine. As early as 3,000 B.C.E., candles made of beeswax were in use in Egypt and Crete. Earlier candles were made of various natural fat, tallow or wax. In the 18th century, spermaceti, oil produced by the sperm whale, was used to produce the finest-quality candle. Late in the 18th century, colza oil and rapeseed oil came into use as much cheaper substitutes. And in 1830, the method of distilling paraffin wax from coal and oil shales was introduced brought about a revolution in the candle industry as paraffin wax could be used to make inexpensive candles of high quality. It burned cleanly and left no unpleasant odor, unlike tallow candles. In recent years, transparent resin-based candles that apparently burn longer than traditional paraffin candles have become commercialized. These candles are often scented and contain oil (https://ko.wikipedia.org/wiki/%EC%96%91%EC%B4%88).
In Korea, lanterns became a common necessity early on as they were easy to make and the fuel was easy to obtain. Candles were commercialized later due to the scarcity of raw materials and the difficulty in production. Although it is unknown exactly when candles were first used in Korea, it is presumed that they have existed since the Gojoseon dynasty\(^1\), as evidenced by literatures and an advanced form of called *machok* presumably from the Three Kingdoms period\(^2\). In addition, candle-scissors—which were used to trim candle wicks-excavated from Anapji Pond in the city of Gyeongju lets us know that candles were already used during the Three Kingdoms period. Interestingly, the blade section is made up of two semi-circles which form a round depression when closed together. The scissors were designed in this way so that any pieces of cut wick fell into the depression, which is a good example of ancient Korean wisdom.

Traditionally in Korea, the candle was an important symbol for marriage. Those used during the wedding ceremony were made with wax of different colors and various patterns to suit the festive mood. They were placed in not only the wedding ceremony venue but also the bridal room for the wedding night.

The finest-quality candles were those made of beeswax. A beeswax candle was traditionally made by boiling the wax in water so as to remove impurities, after which the wax is placed on a plate, rolled into a shaft to make a cylindrical shape and removed from the shaft. In the late Joseon dynasty\(^3\), candles were commonly made by hardening the melted beeswax inside a bamboo stem. The type of candle used mostly by the common people was made of animal fat: beef or pork fat was boiled multiple times to filter out impurities and the clean oil was hardened inside a bamboo stem cut in half.

Candlesticks that support candles were also stylish and elegant, as can be seen from the candlesticks from the Goguryeo\(^4\), Silla\(^5\), and the Unified Silla\(^6\) eras. These candlesticks

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1) An ancient Korean kingdom that, according to the legends, was established in 2,333 BCE by a man who descended from heaven. It is first found in contemporaneous historical records of the early 7th century BCE.
2) The Three Kingdoms of Korea refers to the three kingdoms of Baekje, Silla and Goguryeo, and the period was defined as being from 57 BCE to 668 CE.
3) A Korean kingdom that lasted for approximately five centuries, from July 1392 to October 1897.
4) Goguryeo (37 BCE - 668 CE) was a kingdom located in northern and central parts of the Korean Peninsula and southern Manchuria. It was one of the Three Kingdoms of Korea.
inform us that candles were used only by those in the upper class. Candles were rare and valuable because of the complicated production process, and so were candlesticks. In fact, historical records tell us that candles were used only by the royal family and a limited number of people in the upper class until it was commercialized in the Joseon dynasty.

The pictures below are traditional beeswax candles with peony carvings. These types of candles were used mainly in the court; the common people were allowed to use these candles only during wedding ceremonies.

![Traditional Korean candles (beeswax candle)](http://terms.naver.com/entry.nhn?docId=983304&cid=42962&categoryId=44340)

**III. Symbolic meanings of the candlelight**

1. **Temenos**

Candlelight symbolizes sacredness (Cooper, 1978). A candle without light has no sacred characteristic, because it is through the light of the flame that sacredness and vitality is

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5) Silla (57 BCE - 935 CE) was a kingdom located in southern and central parts of the Korean Peninsula. It was one of the Three Kingdoms of Korea.

6) Unified Silla (668 - 935) is the name often applied to the Korean kingdom of Silla, one of the Three Kingdoms of Korea, after it conquered Baekje and Goguryeo in the 7th century, unifying the central and southern regions of the Korean peninsula.
created. Light represents the birth of the cosmos, revelation of god, universal principles, primordial intellect, life truth, light, formlessness, and the source of good. Light represents the power to cast out the evil spirits or darkness as well as glory, radiance, and joy. The candle acts as a small island of light in the dark. The space of that island is a highly sacred, powerful place of protection with the force to drive out the spirits of darkness (Cooper, 1978).

A sacred space of protection is commonly known as temenos. Temenos has a therapeutic protective role (Friedman & Mitchell, 2011). In alchemy the psychological vessel is called *vas hermetis*, which means the “vessel of Hermes” in Latin. *Vas hermetis* is a container that is used to make gold in alchemy. When heat is applied to the vessel, the piece of lead contained inside undergoes a transformation. But if the vessel cracks and the heat leaks as a result, transformation does not take place. This psychological vessel in Jungian psychology is called temenos. The concept of temenos often refers to a sacred place where ancient rituals took place. But psychologically, Carl Jung characterized temenos as the safe, private inner space deep within us (Jung, 1984).

*Vas hermetis* symbolize the need to withstand high-pressure energy in order to experience transformation. The same kind of process is required during therapy. Without patience and endurance, there will be no inner transformation. We must overcome the resistance and endure until the very end, or else our *vas hermetis* will crack little by little. In the end, however, we often find our true selves in the sacred space of temenos and experience miracles of transformation (Park, 2016).

The candlelight’s symbolism of temenos is often experienced by clients in sandplay therapy. A client whom the therapist called Seol-ee was a high school student in her second year. Her chief complaint was depression, which began when she was ostracized by her peers during her first year at school. During one of her sandplay therapy sessions, Seol-ee lighted a candle, turned off the lights in the therapy room, and talked about her experienced with a very relaxed look on her face:

“My heart was filled with anger, but I could not express it. So I wanted to die every day; I always sat in my dark room crying. I was embarrassed to tell my parents that I had such
emotions inside of me and so I increasingly became cooped up in my own world. I couldn't sleep because I felt that I was going to die if I ever went to sleep. Then I met the candlelight. When I was crying every day in the dark room without going to sleep, my mom left a candle in my room for me without asking the reason for my behavior. I remember the first day when the candle was lit. As soon as the candle was lit, the entire room became so bright that I turned it off. When I lit the candle again, the candlelight glow took a round shape around my body. At first I felt scared, but I gradually began to feel relaxed. It felt as if the candlelight was protecting me. I had the feeling that God came to look after me, so I prayed, and He told me to relax and go to sleep because even if I sleep, I will still be alive. That's the day when I had the deepest sleep. Since then, I've developed the habit of sleeping with a candle lit.” (During session 18 of sandplay therapy)

While talking about her experience, Seol-eo continuously stared at the candlelight. A tear rolled down her cheeks as she smiled, as if to say that her being alive was a miracle. It appeared that in the sacred space of temenos created by the candlelight, Seol-eo felt protected and gained new energy.

The picture below is the Temenos Gate in Petra, Jordan. Built at the western end of Colonnade Street, the Temenos Gate separated the commercial part of the town from the sacred one. Although it looks similar to Roman-style gates, this triple archway built around the second century is an example of Nabataean architecture, which is accentuated by elaborate floral friezes. The Temenos Gate leads to the sacred area of the temple of Qasr al-Bint. When walking past this temple, across the Wadi Musa and through the gorges, there are steps leading up to the monastery of Al-Deir (www.encyber.com).

One has to meet the anima or the animus as well as the shadow in the unconscious to bring unconscious contents to consciousness, a process which is highly difficult and painful. While doing this essential inner work, one experiences struggles and undergoes wounding. It is at this point where one meets temenos (Friedman & Mitchell, 2011). Despite the pain, one can find his or her genuine Self in the safe and protective space of the scared temenos and experience miracles of transformation.
2. Initiation

Initiation is the archetype of death and rebirth. It represents the transition from one status to another, transference to another level of being, death before rebirth, victory over death, and the return to darkness that existed before the light. Often in initiation, there is a process of “falling to hell” in order to overcome the dark aspect of nature before there can be resurrection, light, and ascension. Therefore the rite of initiation usually takes place in an underground cave or a labyrinth. Those who survive the initiation can exit the place of the dark and enter the world of light (Jung, 1984).

Candlelight symbolizes death (Cooper, 1978). Death is the invisibility of life, a parting from the present life, and a transition to the eternal life. A spiritual rebirth takes place following the death in the present life. Death is a transformation from one form of life to another, and a reunion of the body and the earth and of the soul and the spirit.

The wax drips down, or descends, from the candle by its weight. The descent symbolizes the understanding and salvation of the dark side of human nature, and overcoming death. The descent represents going down into the primal darkness that existed before regeneration and rebirth, and going down into hell before resurrection and ascension. The
descent is a journey of initiation and a journey of all gods who are resurrected after death (Jung, 1984).

Here the paper would like to deal with depression, a negative emotional aspect. Depression signifies the depletion of psychic energy available to consciousness. The energy becomes stuck in the unconscious, and the inner world—which has not been taken care of—pressurizes the conscious with great force. During this time one feels despair, empty, and suicidal; these feelings signify that ego-consciousness has reached its limit. It can be said that the suicidal impulse felt during depression is the unconscious drive for the death of the old and the birth the new, e.g., the death of the old ego attitude (Lee, 1999). Unable to bear depression and the dark conscious, one feels an unconscious drive for a suicide, which is the beginning of the journey for initiation. In other words, the development of depressive symptoms is the beginning of the initiation.

A 21-year-old female client who experienced depression with continuous suicidal impulses went through a journey of initiation through the candlelight. She talked about her experience with a candle lit on a table during sessions 13 and 15 of her sandplay therapy:

“When I lit the candle, I felt something tightening and then loosening my body. My mind is blank; I don’t have any thoughts. While becoming blank without realizing it, I felt that I was being controlled by something.” (During session 13 of sandplay therapy)

“As soon as I lit the candle, I saw the window. Out of impulse, I opened the window, climbed up, and was ready to jump. But I was too scared. I came down from the window and waited out loud. And before I knew it I was asleep. I woke up in the morning and saw that the candle was completely burnt out and even the wax was gone. I felt glad and relaxed.” (During session 15 of sandplay therapy)

It seemed that because the client’s conscious was not functioning properly in the unconscious, the client’s unconscious energy was sending her a message: “Take a good look at the unconscious and try to resolve the problem.” The activation of the unconscious energy indicated that the journey of the initiation has begun. And when that journey begins, the unconscious and depression remain dark and seized. It is the candlelight that allowed the client
to see the unknown and unclear world, or the dark unconscious.

When light and darkness were in a state of non-integration, the suicidal impulse seemed to have descended through the candlelight and connected to rebirth amid the dark. As the unconscious is explored and brought closer to consciousness the candlelight, the client was able to face the opposites in the depths and thereby experienced both light and darkness directly. The client experienced an initiation in her inner world.

To attain consciousness, one needs to go through the painful process of containing the opposites. In addition, the repeated process of losing the meaning of life, going through conflicts, and then gaining peace as well as the process of going down into the dark world of the unconscious are required (Yoo, 2016).

Another word for initiation is the coming of age or the rite of passage. It is an essential process for a child to become an adult. The purpose of an initiation is to kill the child, or the past self. It requires the dismantling the child’s ego so as to be reborn as an adult (Friedman et al., 2011). While it is painful, the initiation process is essential for clients’ growth.

### 3. Development of Consciousness

The candlelight is a common symbol of consciousness. Seven candles in particular represent the relationship between microcosm and macrocosm or between humanity and god, as the number seven contains three and four, the number of god and the number of human, respectively.

In order for something to become conscious, we must look at the unconscious. The unconscious is something that has “not become conscious.” Much of the unconscious can be assimilated into the contents of the conscious through our active awareness. The first thing we see in the process of making the unconscious conscious is the shadow (Lee, 1999).

In the process of becoming conscious, it is necessary that we meet our shadow aspect or the dark side of our personality. Standing right behind the conscious, these psychological contents-or the primitive psychological tendencies and qualities—remain unconscious and undifferentiated. The shadow consists of negative and inferior aspects of our personality as well
as immoral elements that we cannot easily accept as part of ourselves. The shadow contain
more of the basic animal instincts than any other archetypes. It is the strongest and potentially
the most dangerous of all archetypes as it is deeply rooted in the history of evolution. Because
of the shadow’s negative image, the ego is often reluctant to accept the shadow as part of
itself. However, the shadow is not originally evil, negative and inferior. It had only lost the
opportunity to become differentiated as it was hidden in the dark, the unconscious. Once the
shadow become conscious, it plays a creative and positive role in our lives (Lee, 1999).

During her sandplay therapy process, Seol-ee was able to bring her shadow to
consciousness through the candlelight. Seol-ee made the following comments, which she said
were a secret, after lighting several candles on a table:

“My nickname is “silly.” My friends gave me this nickname to make fun of me; they say that
I smile silly all the time. I always had this silly smile on my face during my second year of high
school because I didn’t want other people to know that I feel depressed and lonely inside. I’m scared
that my friends will know about my depression. So when I come home, I try to relax by going to
sleep with a candle lit.” (During session 32 of sandplay therapy)

Through her defensive mechanism of smiling, Seol-ee suppressed her shadow of
depression. And she consoled her anxiety-which came from the fear that her school friends may
find out about her shadow-with the candlelight. The negative aspect of the shadow was
brought to consciousness in a positive fashion through the candlelight.

The process of bringing the shadow to consciousness through the candlelight can also
be found in the Roman myth of Cupid and Psyche. The name of the heroine “Psyche” means
the “soul” or “butterfly.” It has the same spelling and pronunciation as the psychological term
“ psyche” that we are familiar of.

A king and queen had three daughters, and among them the youngest and most beautiful was
Psyche. Jealous of the beautiful Psyche, the goddess Venus instructs her son, Cupid, to make the girl
fall in love with the most hideous man alive. But when Cupid sees Psyche in her radiant glory,
be falls in love with her and they become husband and wife. Cupid visits his wife only in total
darkness and warns her that they will forever part if she every tries to see his face. When Psyche’s
two sisters see the splendor in which she lives, they become envious, and undermine her happiness by prodding her to uncover her husband’s true identity. Confused and conflicted, Psyche turns on a candle one night as her husband lies next to her and sees the beautiful Cupid asleep on her bed. When a bit of wax fell from her candle onto Cupid’s shoulder, Cupid awakens and deserts her for her mistrust (Gardner, 1999).

The shadow, or the dark mistrust that hidden in the beauty of Psyche, came to consciousness through the candlelight. When the candle wax fell down, or descended to the unconscious, and woke up Cupid, Psyche was able to see the shadow in her unconscious.

There is a Psyche in every woman. When a woman meets the Psyche in her, she feels deep loneliness. In this light, it can be said that every woman is, in part, a daughter of a king or a princess because the Psyche in each woman is loving, perfect and profound. When a woman feels a certain distance from people around her, she meets Psyche in her inner world. This moment brings unbearable pain and loneliness, which is the characteristic of Psyche. But these women cannot figure out how to deal with these feelings. If a woman has a strong Psychic personality, she may be able to suddenly cry and say, “No one really understands me in the end.” But no one can understand other’s Psychic character. But this characteristic certainly exist in the inner world of all women. If women can recognize the Psychic characteristics within them, they will be able to bring their unconscious characteristics to consciousness and naturally begin the process of a noble evolution. This process is painful yet very beautiful (Robert, 2006).

The unconscious sometimes informs us of something that we are not conscious of, thereby allowing us to achieve balance with regard to our awareness, emotions and behaviors and to adapt to the environment. In the dark realm of the unconscious, there are potentialities that we may not recognize but are indispensable for our survival. For that reason, we must always keep our inner eyes opened and awake so as to accept and respect our shadows (Lee, 2014).

An adequate amount of ego-consciousness and courage are required to bring the shadow to consciousness. Jung (1984) said that only when one sees his or her shadow and can withstand the knowledge of himself or herself can he or she resolve a small part of life’s task;
in other words, he or she at least can overcome his or her personal unconsciousness.

IV. Symbolisms of the candle in clients’ sandpictures

1. Temenos

The client was a 38-year-old woman whose chief complaints were depression and feelings of a loss. She was working hard to be recognized as a professional woman. However, she reported as feeling lonely and isolated at work. She had a low self-esteem and a sense of inferiority and therefore felt that her coworkers were slighting her.

![Image](image.png)

Figure 4. Sandpicture with a candles (session 8)

After creating this sandpicture, the client asked, “Can I turn off the light for a moment and close my eyes?” With her eyes closed, she seemed to be lost in thought. After a while, she lit the candle inside the tray and observed her sandpicture by the candlelight. She said the following:

“This woman looks very comfortable. She needed to relax, which is possible only when the candle is lit. It feels very cozy with the candlelight on, and my body seems to relax as well.” (During session 8 of sandplay therapy)
With care, the client spent a lot of time making the shape of the sun with the sand. The sun symbolizes the supreme power of the cosmos, the power of god that penetrates into all things, the heart of the cosmos, and the center of being (Bradway, 2001). Inside the sun is an archetypal figure symbolizing the feminine, in a curled-up form, and a candle illuminating that archetypal figure. A fence is circling around them.

It seemed that Psyche’s femininity, which felt lonely and isolated due to a lack of relationships, was feeling comfortable while being protected by the sacred space of the candlelight. It was as if the client experienced tenemos through the candlelight and therefore felt the energy of protection.

2. Initiation

This client was in her third year in elementary school. What first struck the therapist was that the client laughed with her mouth wide open without making a sound. That the client was wearing a lot of jewelries-three rings, two necklaces, and two bracelets-was also interesting. The client’s problem, as reported by the mother, was that she threw a tantrum too often and was too self-centered. The mother explained when the client wants something, she would whine, scream and cry until the mother finally buys it for her. Other problems included the client’s constantly looking for her mother. She would become angry when the mother was absent from home and would often call home at school after the first period. She also attacked the mother verbally. For instance, while calling home from school, the client suddenly said, “I wish you (the mother) would get stabbed by scissors and die.”

Figure 5 is when the client first used candles in her sandpicture. The client chose her figures very carefully, one by one. When she selected the spider and the snake, she claimed that they were disgusting and frightening but there was a strong energy of anger in her eyes. The energy looked strong enough to kill the spider and the snake. It was especially interesting to see that the client tilted the lighted candles so that the wax fell on the sand. After finishing her creation, the client said the following:
“This is the world of candlelight. I don’t really want to talk about it, but to tell you just a little bit, there are rides that only children can ride on. This is a very scary place (referring to the brown figure at the front center area). When you go in here you’ll get shocked, because there are strange monsters inside. Both adults and children can enter here. Now we have to turn off the light. The monsters will come out during the dark. I’m going to light the candle until there is melted wax and sprinkle the wax on sand, because these are poisonous spider and poisonous snake monsters and they’re afraid of the candle wax.” (During session 17 of sandplay therapy)

After creating the sandpicture—and without lighting the candles—the client turned off the lights in the therapy room and explained that monsters—the poisonous spider and snake—would come out during the dark. The therapist’s body trembled from the strong energy of anger that emanated from the client’s eyes as she watched those monster figures. A positive symbolism of the spider is creativity (represented by the web) whereas the negative symbolism is terrible death (Bradway, 2001). Because the client explained that the spider is “poisonous,” this particular spider in the sandtray could represent the terrible death. Snakes are the masters of initiatory rituals with “transcendental functions” (Bradway, 2001) and are known as the symbol of complex or powerful force in mythologies.

The client was expressing her strong anger toward her mother. The spider and the snake implied that the client was experiencing negative energy, or complex, in relation to her mother. It appeared that through anger the client was experiencing a psychological death. The
client, who wanted to receive protection and love from her mother; but whenever the mother was not home, the client felt a sense of separation and a tremendous amount of pain. Neumann (1963) stated that in so far as the liberation of consciousness is painful and difficult, the unconscious is perceived symbolically as the so-called Terrible Mother, which seemed to have been projected to the poisonous spider and the poisonous snake in the case of this client.

The client sprinkled the melted candle wax on the sand, threatening the poisonous spider and the poisonous snake with it. It was as if the client had gone down to the unconscious, faced her complex, and begun the journey of her initiation through the candle wax. Though painful, this important process allowed the client to meet a positive mother archetype and begin the mother-child separation.

3. Bringing the Shadow to Consciousness

The client was a 16-year-old girl in her third year in middle school. Her chief complaints were anxiety, depression and disobedience. She was a bit different from typical clients in that she was actually the perpetrator of school bullying. She had a borderline intellectual functioning of 80, lacked the ability to understand situations, and had a victim mentality. She experienced neglect at home; her causing trouble at school was rooted in the desire to get the attention of her parents.
During session 12, the client made a strenuous effort hard to make a pretty heart shape with the candles for a long time. Her face remained expressionless as she concentrated on the work. The only words she spoke were, “It’s beautiful,” after finishing the picture. The therapist felt uneasy when the client made this sandpicture. The client looked lonely and depressed while trying hard to make a beautiful heart shape. And when the client lit the candles, the therapist felt that she would start a fire.

The heart symbolizes the mind, a body organ, and love. It is one of the oldest symbols. The shape of the heart is related to medieval symbols representing fire and flight, or symbols representing union or togetherness.

The heart symbol was used in many major cultures and religions. For Christians, it represents the love of Christ. In ancient Greece around 600-400 BCE, the heart symbol was associated with flowers and the attributes of Eros, the god of love (Mitford & Wilkinson, 2010). It was also used among the Aztecs, Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Jews, Celtics, Taoists and Africans.

In reality the client had an insatiate desire for love, and that desire caused her to experience loss. The heart was what was in her conscious. But her unconscious was full of anger, loneliness and anxiety, which were felt by the therapist through transference. These emotions were probably delivered to the therapist as things in the client’s unconscious came to consciousness through the candlelight.

V. Conclusion

This paper analyzed the three symbolism of the candlelight, which were manifested in clients' stories and sandpictures as well as mythologies, from the viewpoint of analytical psychology: the “temenos” or the divine and protective space, the “initiation” toward death in the process of rebirth, and “the development of consciousness” through which contents of the unconscious come to consciousness and naturally begin to evolve.

The candlelight illuminates the darkness by burning its body. This nature of the candlelight is linked to the symbolisms of birth, death and rebirth. These symbolisms can be
The candlelight enabled the clients to confront their complex and begin the journey of initiation. It appeared that, through this process, they were able to overcome at least their personal unconscious and safely gain consciousness. The candle seemed to serve as an important symbol for the clients’ gaining consciousness in a sacred, protected space.

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