

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF SANDPLAY

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Sandplay, as originated by Jungian analyst Dora Kalff, is a process of observing pictures created in the sand and understanding them from a Jungian perspective. Sandplay is a natural therapeutic modality that uses the language of symbols to facilitate the expression of the unconscious, archetypal, and internal worlds. Sandplay is different from the generic term "sand tray" that is frequently used in play therapy and pre-school situations, as well as in some diagnostic settings. Sand tray is a much more general term, referring to using miniatures in the sand but without the Jungian-oriented theoretical basis of Sandplay.

There are a variety of ways to use miniatures in sand. The compilation of articles in this book, however, represents a Kalffian/Jungian perspective written by experienced therapists who have explored many facets of Sandplay in their own practices. Great interest has grown up around this Kalffian approach.

For example, in Japan Sandplay is one of the major psychotherapeutic approaches. In North America, Sandplay has gained increasing popularity with large groups of therapists seeking Sandplay training. There are also strong centers of interest in Europe, particularly in England, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland. Sandplay has truly evolved into a cross-cultural technique. The worldwide tapestry of connections that Kalff began weaving continues to grow through the work of the International Society of Sandplay Therapy (ISST) that she founded in 1985 to provide training and certification in Sandplay.

The history of the Kalffian Sandplay movement began in the 1950s. It was then that Kalff attended a lecture given by English pediatrician Lowenfeld in which she described her "World Technique." This technique was developed to facilitate therapeutic communication with children, and was spontaneously embraced by the children themselves as they referred to their sand pictures as their "world." Kalff was impressed by Lowenfeld's approach and intrigued with pursuing it further. When Kalff told C.G. Jung how this technique had caught her imagination, he remembered that he had responded to a World Technique presentation that Lowenfeld had given in 1937 at a conference in France. He encouraged Kalff's personal interest in the technique and he also saw the potential of the World Technique to act as a symbolic tool for children. Until this time, child therapy was not practiced by Jungian therapists.

In 1956 Kalff went to London to study with Lowenfeld for one year. This experience helped solidify the direction of Kalff's future work with Sandplay. After her study, she returned to continue her practice in Switzerland, integrating her Jungian-based approach with what she had learned from her work with Lowenfeld. Over time, Kalff's ideas crystallized into a creative integration that joined a symbolic, archetypal orientation with Lowenfeld's communication approach. Kalff's method added a deeper symbolic understanding and facilitated a healing experience.

In the late 1950s, Dora Kalff's reputation for healing via Sandplay was mainly word of mouth. People came to see her and work in the sand at her 500-year-old, country-style home in Zollikon, Switzerland (near Zurich). They often brought their children and then as they saw the results, they either returned or stayed on for their own Sandplay experience. In the 1960s, Frau Kalff began traveling through Europe and to the United States (particularly to the west coast), as well as to Asia. Her charismatic teaching style, plus the way she interpreted Sandplay images to her audiences, inspired many to pursue this work themselves. Her understanding of the symbolic Jungian approach was combined with her ability to speak very movingly about the deeper healing dimension that could be constellated in Sandplay. She spoke about a need to contact something that many of us feel is missing in our current materialistic, outer-oriented world, a quality that is difficult to access in verbal therapy alone.

In her lectures, Kalff showed photographic slides of her cases, touching the imagination of her audiences directly and making the images and stories in Sandplay come alive. She illustrated how Sandplay can help us get in touch with our own internal natural balance as well as facilitate a connection to the spiritual realm. This message resonated in many of us who also feel the lack of these elements in our world today.

Now, even after Kalff's death in 1991, Sandplay continues to move forward through the original writings and presentations of many of her early students, as well as those of the next generation. These Sandplay therapists have expanded her work and impacted on the growth and development of Sandplay. Therapists have found that Sandplay, with its spontaneous, immediate, and nonverbal aspects, provides an opportunity for the client's inner struggle to become visible and concrete in therapy. While some of these therapists have stayed close to clinical work, others have moved out into the school setting—into classrooms and school counselors' offices. Increasingly, more people have discovered that physically engaging the sand (i.e., mother earth) as well as connecting to the symbolic realm add an additional dimension to therapy and counseling. Sandplay has clearly emerged as one of those

facilitators that reaches into the deepest levels of the unconscious to access healing energies and offers a compatible balance to the verbal and rational in traditional therapy.