

What Are Words?

By
Alexander M Zoltai

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Where Do The Words Come From . . . ?

Oh, my, I hope I didn't lose any readers because the title of this section ends with a preposition ...

It's really ok to do it—honest :-)

Words are slippery critters, for readers, writers, and publishers.

Words can seem to appear on the screen or page but they live in our minds and hearts.

Words might be called “metaphysical entities”, even if they point to physical things.

My absolutely favorite word is “Word” :-)

So where do they come from?

If, in fact, they are metaphysical, they live in a non-physical realm. (*Was that a too-obvious sentence?*)

Some folks may be cringing at my use of the word metaphysical but I should point out that there are many things besides souls, epic emotions, dreams, prayers, and words that are well accepted as existing though they're not physical; like gravity, magnetism, simple numbers, and the whole field of mathematics.

So, if words come from and actually exist in a non-physical realm, what are these things I'm typing into this essay?

These things, like this very word << are the physical representations of Real Words. Perhaps an example will help the explanation:

“Jack took his time thinking over Joyce's proposition. If he agreed, his life would change, irrevocably—jumping off a nine-story building had its risks. If he didn't agree, Joyce would leave him—again, a choice with risks...”

What happened in your mind as you were reading that? What did you see? Did you feel anything about Jack or Joyce?

Every word-symbol in that example pointed to Real Words in your mind. The meaning of the word-symbols on the screen and the meaning of the Real Words in your mind are different. In fact, the word-symbols have no meaning until your mind assigns meaning to them...

Words are so slippery that humanity has a thriving industry of creating dictionaries—full of complicated word-symbols—just so we humans can have a modicum of agreement on what Real Words mean—yet, the Real Words keep changing on us—evolving and even cozying up with each other to breed new words...

So, there's my theory (truncated, to be sure) of where words come from.

What do you think?

Oh, I know, I haven't, yet, clearly described that metaphysical realm where words hang out but I will; oh, yes, I will :-)

Come on, I dare ya—what do you think about words as metaphysical entities?

I've Never Really Seen A Word . . .

I've postulated that words are metaphysical entities—that the things we see on the screen or paper aren't Real Words but just the symbols we use to get a set of Real Words from one mind to another.

If the word “metaphysical” isn't something you're real comfortable with, you may also have an issue with my saying that Minds are metaphysical.

If you doubt that bald statement you may want to [check out the Wikipedia entry that includes this statement](#): “The nature of the mind and its relation to the body has been seen as more of a problem as science has progressed in its mechanistic understanding of the brain and body”

I can only continue on the assumption that our minds and the words which come from them are metaphysical because I've spent most of my 69 years studying the whole messy business of how we think and why we write.

If you can't believe that the mind and words are something other than physical entities then I suppose you can only leave me behind in your cloud of dust...

OK, now where are the Real Words and how did they get there?

Some folks are happy saying God created words and that's that.

Some folks could agree with that last statement but would need a bit more explanation about where they hang out and how we know about them.

Some folks believe that humans evolved a capacity to formulate words, even though they couldn't see them.

Some folks don't really give a damn :-)

So, as they say, for the sake of the argument, let's temporarily agree that words are not physical and hang out somewhere in our minds.

I'll propose they have their residence in what's called the [Collective Unconscious](#). For now just think of the collective unconscious as a realm so deep in the mind that there are no "my thoughts" or "your thoughts" but only the energy patterns that make conscious thought possible.

These energy patterns are ultra-creative and we all share them—the same basic primal patterns of all words, concepts, and thoughts are in every one of our minds—this is why you can understand what I'm typing right now, even if you don't believe what I'm typing :-)

I'll attempt a detailed description of how a set of Real Words gets from one mind to another: but, first...

Prelude To An Explanation of The Origin of Words...

I promised one of the regular readers of my blog that I'd explain how I think Real Words are produced in our minds and then begin the journey to other minds through what most people think are real words << those symbols that exist on screens and pages but aren't Real Words...

As a beginning to the section about the journeys Real Words make, I should point out that I'm not going to be talking about the origins of English words in other and older languages—that's something you can explore with this cool [online Etymology Dictionary](#).

A related site that includes a forum to discuss words and their histories is [Wordwizard](#).

Also, for true word-lovers, there are [the links page on The Sciolist](#).

What's next is a description of the origin of words before they end up being in languages—the rock-bottom, primal dwelling place of Real Words...

Since this exploration will touch on concepts like Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, you might want to save the link to [this article](#).

How The Words Get On The Screen/Page ~ Part One

Even though my theories of word creation and transmission are my own conceptions, they're based on years of study—Carl Jung's works, conversations with my Muse, other psychologists, various spiritual mentors, arguments with myself, and conversations with other writers.

I find Jung's ideas of the Mind the most useful because they've proven their practical value.

Let's start with a word-symbol formula of the full process, from word-creation to word use, by showing the various areas of mind/body involved, in the order they're activated:

Collective Unconscious→Personal Unconscious→Shadow→Conscious Mind→Brain→Body→Screen/Paper

Collective Unconscious:

This is where all the Archetypes hang out and have “sex” with each other. The Collective Unconscious is full of Psychological Energy Patterns like Mother, Father, Child, Lover, Murder, Transmutation, Hero, Wise Old Person, and tons more.

For more background knowledge [check out this entry in Wikipedia](#).

These metaphysical entities are called Psychological Energy Patterns because they have no specific conscious form. For instance, the Mother Archetype is not a particular mother and has no particular traits or personality—She belongs to all of us since this is the Collective Unconscious. In a way, she contains all the possible traits and powers of all possible mothers. She's also the source of the word, “mother”.

All these Energy Patterns are always blending and interacting—having “Sex”. This constant creative activity, deep within us, is the ultimate source of all our thoughts since it's believed the Collective Unconscious gives birth to the Conscious Mind.

The qualities of the main, person-like Archetypes are what give birth to the characters of a story; their interactions are what produces the plot.

But, we don't just peer into the Collective Unconscious with our ego-mind and snatch plot, character, and word.

By the way, it's the intense, creative interactions of all the Archetypes that produce what I've been calling Real Words. The Words that hold the complete Meanings. For example, not the mere word-symbol, “tree”, that each of us has packed with slightly different Meanings, but the Real Word, “TREE”, that contains all of whatever can be considered Tree-ness ...

Personal Unconscious:

This is where the broad, ultra-creative, endlessly active Words produced by the Interactions of the Archetypes become more like what most people call “words”.

The Personal Unconscious is where we can get a first glimpse of an image of a mother or a tree or a murderer.

The Personal Unconscious also has a lively interaction with the Conscious Mind and stores memories and concepts and words that the Conscious Mind has labored over. But it uses the infusion of creativity from the Collective Unconscious to massage the memories/concepts/words so that, even though the word “tree” is there in the Personal Unconscious all the time, it’s being “worked-on” by both the Collective and Conscious Mind—it’s evolving...

Also, the words in the Personal Unconscious are the ones that have the normal “word-histories” that an [etymology dictionary](#) contains.

This mutual interaction of Collective Unconscious with Personal Unconscious and Personal Unconscious with Conscious Mind aren’t the only instances of creative “loops” in that schematic, straight-line formula I proposed earlier:

Collective Unconscious→Personal Unconscious→Shadow→Conscious Mind→Brain→Body→Screen/Paper

How The Words Get On The Screen/Page ~ Part Two

We've looked at the two aspects of our Mind that are, for most people, non-existent.

The Collective Unconscious being the vast and hidden pool of ultimate creativity—full of characters and powers and Real Words. The Personal Unconscious being the normally-unappreciated workshop where energy-patterns from the Collective Unconscious and memories/concepts/words from the Conscious Mind commingle—our personal metaphysical workplace.

Here again is the straight-line, word-symbol formula (from where the Real Words are born to our practical use of them):

Collective Unconscious→Personal Unconscious→Shadow→Conscious Mind→Brain→Body→Screen/Paper

The next player in this wordly drama is the Shadow—often described in ways that can scare some folks but, for most writers, a very fertile field for fashioning the darker characters and themes.

The Personal Unconscious stores (and massages) the memories, concepts, and words that we sometimes call “Good”. The Shadow stores what we sometimes call “Bad”.

Most people’s anxiety (and, sometimes, mental illness) comes from the battle between their Conscious Mind and the Shadow—the Ego Mind valiantly ignoring the repressed darkness, while it

cheerfully projects all its unregenerate and primitive aspects on other people—thinking that this frees the Conscious Mind from having to worry about “the other half of a Full Life” ...

The Night holds its terrors and the Shadow is each person’s personal Night. We can deal with it—accept that we aren’t perfectly right and sweetly angelic—and infuse the total darkness with the Light of Self-Reflection, a strenuous effort but work that can set us free of so many nagging or even vicious tests and trials...

Writers can definitely benefit (increase mental hygiene) from the work of rendering “bad characters”; yet, if the bad folk have no redeeming qualities (even if only potentially), the writer is only transferring to the screen or page the same dangerous Projection of the Unregenerated—not dealing deeply with the Forces of Darkness, not giving the Night a chance to taste the Day, leaving the critical tasks of life to other, more honest writers...

Please understand, the actual day-to-day labor of keeping the contents of the Shadow above-ground and in control is very hard work. Rendering fully-fleshed-out “dark” characters is just as hard. Then, there’s the complementary sin—“good” characters who have no flaws

So, even though the full treatment of all these aspects of our minds may be compelling, it’s impossible in an essay’s format. I recommend, for readers unafraid of arduous mental effort, [The Jung Page](#).

It’s time for a recap that focuses on the transmission of words:

Real Words are born in the Collective Unconscious. They present themselves as Useable Words in the Personal Unconscious. They pass through the Shadow (often given unique connotations) and arrive in the Conscious Mind.

Many folks think that all their word-fashioning happens in the Conscious Mind—unaware of the nearly magical and usually uncredited contributions from the Shadow, Personal Unconscious, and Collective Unconscious.

Having an active and engaged Muse is the best way to maintain an awareness that the Conscious Mind is the least powerful agent in any attempt at creative writing...

OK, we have the words in the Conscious Mind and they spill out, through the Brain and Body, to the Screen or Paper.

Whew!!

I envy people who never consider committing words to screen or paper. All they have to do is merrily let the words spring from their mouths, while the people they speak to do the editing :-)

What Happens When We Read? ~ Part One

We looked at words as Metaphysical Entities, explored the Source of Real Words (the Collective Unconscious), and traced the mysterious path of those slippery yet powerful words through the other domains of our minds till they reached our Brain and spilled out on the screen or some good old-fashioned paper.

Now, let's explore what happens when we turn on the screen or pick up the paper and read a set of words—*Correction*: our eyes read Word-Symbols, physical entities that are clues, triggering our minds to find the actual words and make sense of them.

So, there are the word-symbols and the eye is scanning them.

The brain registers this and begins its decoding process—sending the potential words to the conscious mind.

The conscious mind takes some infinitesimally small amount of time to check with the personal unconscious—accessing memory stores and correlating meanings already learned with the translated word-symbols.

During that same ultra-short period of time, the Shadow makes its contribution to the meanings. If the conscious mind is on good terms with the Shadow, the words arising in the mind will have the benefit of wearing uncommon and personalized meanings along with the more “standard” ones stored in the personal unconscious. If the conscious mind is in a state of ignorance about the contents of the Shadow, the word-meanings can become “warped” and we may end up completely misunderstanding the meaning the author is trying to convey (part two of this topic will explore, in a bit more depth, the difference between what the author intends and what the reader gets) ...

Also during that ultra-short period of time, various word-combinations may trigger the collective unconscious. This can bring up some extremely powerful images and energies. We may have to stop reading to grasp what's happening, we may slam the book shut or close the computer file, we may be taken into a dream-realm...

So, what about all those images in our conscious mind while we're reading? Well, they sure aren't created in our small and cramped ego-consciousness.

Let's say the word-symbols on the screen/page are: “John walked down the dirt road, happy that he had no idea where he was going.”

“John walked down the dirt road...”, will more than likely call up images stored in the personal unconscious, though, if you asked a thousand readers to describe that dirt road, you'd have a thousand different dirt roads, depending on the individual reader's experience. *{imagine for a second a reader who had never seen or read about a dirt road...}*

Of course, if a reader had been down some dirt roads, the image would be colored with some blend of those experiences. If they'd had a scare while on a dirt road, that feeling-image may come to mind and they may worry about John.

If they'd been on a dirt road as a child and had an adult molest them, as well as having consigned that memory to their Shadow, they may break out in a sweat and have an anxiety attack ...

So, no matter what response the many realms of our mind have handed us about John and his dirt road, we come upon the word-symbols, "...happy that he had no idea where he was going."

That part of the sentence will heavily depend for its meaning on how we've conceived of John and what dirt roads mean to us but...

Since most folks seem to, most often, like to know where they're going, the fact that John was happy about not knowing has the potential for inducing some very strong feeling-images.

I would absolutely **love** to know what you felt and imaged as you read that sentence: "John walked down the dirt road, happy that he had no idea where he was going." *You can send your responses to amzolt@gmail.com*

What Happens When We Read? ~ Part Two

Our last post had me saying: "part two of this topic will explore, in a bit more depth, the difference between what the author intends and what the reader gets"

I thought hard about how to do this and I'm sure, at some point in the future, I'll be writing more about it.

In fact, back in January, I wrote the post, [Rewriting While You Read ~ We All Do It ...](#), which touched on this topic.

So, my intense thought came up with the idea that various readers getting various things from what an author writes (*and, that it may or may not be what the author intended*) could be well-served by putting part of an author's work here and urging my readers to say what they get from it—what they think the book will say... Then, the author can say how close folks got with their intuitions.

I chose the Prologue from the book [Notes from An Alien](#) since a prologue is intended to foreshadow what the book will and won't be. The reason I chose this particular prologue is that I'm the author of that book and I know exactly what I intended (*and, that link to the book will let you have a Free Copy*). I'll reveal my opinions on how close you got to what I intended in a return email (*again, I'm at amzolt@gmail.com*).

Here it is:

Prologue

This is a tale that spans a large tract of time: from the horrific 500-year war to the immaculate peace—a peace we feel will never falter since we so often stumbled, fell, and rose again on the road we had to create to find that peace.

My name is Sena Quaren and this book is a story told in “notes”. Even though some readers may think it is a novel or a history, its form is difficult to classify in what are called genres.

What I say next may or may not be believed but, either way, this story is true—true as fact or true in the way fiction can rise to heights unattainable by mere facts.

I am a woman from a star system about twelve light-years from Earth. If you choose to believe me, my story might be considered a history lesson—how to achieve unity and peace—a lesson that Earth desperately needs. If you choose to not believe I’m real, my tale might be considered a science fiction story about how to achieve unity and peace—a lesson that Earth desperately needs...

I’ll proceed on the premise that I am real.

My sources of information range from the official and personally-invasive computer records of the corporate World, Anga-Param, to the vivid oral traditions of the religious World, Anla-Purum, to the stories handed down through my extended family. And, even though I’m speaking to you now in what’s called first-person point of view, most of the story will be told in what writers call third-person omniscient, which means that the other people in this tale won’t be the storytellers. This is what writers on Earth use to give them more freedom of expression—jumping from an overall point of view to very personal views and back out, much like what a camera does in a movie. My “voice” will return when the story arrives at my birth.

This story’s spine is the line of ancestors that culminated in my life. The final chapter will be told by my daughter, Ararura. She is my future.

There’s something important you need to know before you read the story: My people, the Angians, over many hundreds of years, learned to work with naturally-occurring plasma.

Sorry for this short scientific digression, but if you don’t have a basic understanding of plasma, you’ll miss much of the meaning of this story.

The forms of matter most people are familiar with are solids, liquids, and gases—all of which keep their electrons in orbit around the nucleus—the core of an atom. Plasma is a state of matter in which the electrons and nuclei are separate and most of it is invisible. Still, because of its electrical and magnetic properties, its ability to organize and shape the other forms of matter is incredibly more powerful than gravity. Another important fact is that plasma is the most abundant form of matter. About ninety-nine percent of the universe is plasma.

Some common, visible examples are lightning, neon signs, an aurora, and a simple fire.

O.K., scientific digression done.

We Angians have learned to harness plasma as a catalyst to increase the receiving and transmitting qualities of our minds. Note well, though, that common, invisible plasma also carries an imprint of emotions.

The Angian system's plasma distribution caused a natural and powerful enhancement of mental/emotional connection between two of our Worlds—Anga-Param, the corporate World, and Anla-Purum, the religious World. Luckily, this only happened during a short period every five years when the two planets were closest to each other.

It should be noted that this mental/emotional planetary connection was used extensively as a weapon in our 500-year InterWorld War. There are even some who claim plasma is the primary conduit for spiritual experiences.

Before we learned to use this power productively many people were doomed to a miserable life in mental institutions. A small percentage of us not only escaped the confusion of the interpenetration of other minds and hearts but could train ourselves to use the plasma even when the planets were not close. An even smaller percentage could reach out beyond our planets and explore alien minds. This is how I found Alexander, the co-author of this book.

Alexander is my transducer—my way of communicating with Earth's people. We have an intimate mental/spiritual bond—not “conversation” but something much deeper and higher—a conceptual bonding. A simplistic example would be to say that we share things like the idea of dog and cat but not the knowledge of beagles and tabbies. A more accurate example would be that we easily share an idea like four-footed, domesticated animal but not ideas like dog or cat or lizard. Those differences take much more conceptual exploration and sharing.

The sharing we do is rich and meaningful and Meaning is what is most important. Even though trees and flowers and bodies in the Angi system are significantly different than on Earth and even though the way Angians think and feel and act has its peculiarities, there are sufficient similarities that make all the Angian jargon unnecessary. The only times I worked hard to give Alexander specific words to use was when reference was made to names of people and places.

I've come to completely trust Alexander to take the meanings I give him and share them with you in meaningful ways. I've had significant culture-shock learning about your World and you would feel the same thing if you truly experienced our Worlds. Yet, understanding is the goal—unity of thought and feeling. Even though the specific history of our Worlds is different than yours, I'm sure you'll find valuable information in this story—information that can help Earth.

Alexander and I have worked together to interact with hundreds of humans before we ever sat down to write this book—he worked to help me understand humanity so I could make my story of real help in the efforts to stem the tide of the multiple, global crises Earth is suffering. I've communicated, with Alexander's help, through forums on the Web as well as through the avatar he created for me in the virtual world, Second Life. As this book was being written, we interacted with many reviewers on our publisher's web site, FastPencil. At the end of this book you'll find a listing of the people who helped me prepare for and accomplish the incredibly complex task of writing a book.

My story begins with one planet, the corporate World, Anga-Param, just a bit ahead of Earth in technological development and another planet, the religious World, Anla-Purum, in some timeless state of self-engrossment.

Even though our Worlds are now approximately 1,000 years further along the evolutionary trail than your World, my story begins with a time quite similar, in meaning, to what Earth is experiencing. Anla-Purum, the religious World, is at the stage of Earth cultures called “primitive”. Anga-Param, the

corporate World, is what might be called “advanced”. In the thirty years before the beginning of my story Anga-Param had sent automated ships to Anla-Purum, delivering what you might call radio equipment. It differs from your technology in one important way. Because it works in tandem with our abundant plasma, not only words are transmitted. Emotions are also riding the waves.

This mental/emotional, plasma-radio contact was the first proof that our Worlds had deep similarities. For example, learning each other’s languages was as simple as learning a new dialect of one language.

So, there it is. You’re about to read the story of a People who went from a 500-year InterWorld War and nearly complete loss of hope to enduring security. May the truth we discovered bring you courage to face the necessities of building a path toward global peace.

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So, if you decided to read the rest of the book, what would you expect to experience?

And, what would you expect to not experience?

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