

About Editing the Lectures

By Judith Saly

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Eva (Broch) Pierrakos delivered the Guide lectures in a state of trance, with closed eyes. The lectures were tape recorded, and, always the next day, Eva transcribed them herself. The Guide used her verbal equipment, which was adequate to translate the teachings from spirit language into English, but not into good English. As Eva's English improved over the years, so did the Guide's, but Eva knew that her transcripts needed editing.

By "spirit language," I mean the dimension of communication possible only in the spirit world. The Guide has explained to us how difficult it was for him to compress his teachings into human language. I once had an unforgettable personal experience that has given me an inkling of what he was talking about. I woke from a dream – but it was more like remembering something that really happened – in which I was communicating with two entities. The entities themselves and the communication, back and forth between the three of us, were full of colors and shapes. Through these colors and shapes we communicated in an indescribably complete and instantaneous way. The pleasure of this all-encompassing, deepest communication defies description. The completeness of the exchange of thought-feeling-information-love could in no way be translated into human words.

Over the years, a number of people helped Eva in editing the lectures. Eva was grateful and uncritical. Her lack of interest in the quality of the editing was similar to her lack of interest in preserving the tapes, which she re-used until Jose Asencio put a stop to this practice and saved the tapes.

Around the time my husband John Saly and I joined the Path, a man named Nat Young edited the lectures, rather badly. I don't know who took over after he died, but eventually Eva asked John and me to take on this job. This must have been sometime in the late sixties. John and I did the editing together. (John was a professor of English; I had worked for Columbia University Press, and had taken a whole year's course in editing and publishing.) We were very careful not to edit out or distort anything, but in addition to correcting typos and misspellings, we sometimes also needed to improve really bad syntax to make the meaning clearer.

Our corrected typescript went back to Eva who scanned it briefly and approved it. She never questioned any of the changes we had made. I don't think that was because our editing was faultless, but because she trusted that they were OK and because she didn't want to spend too much time on it. Then the manuscript went to the typist. For several years, Moira Shaw typed the lectures from the corrected manuscripts. Eva looked through the final copy, and then it was duplicated according to the technical possibilities of the time. Unfortunately, she never kept her original transcripts.

At that time, it would not have been possible for us to have done a more extensive editing than we did, though we knew that it was not adequate. We had not ingested the teachings enough to do that with confidence. The teachings were new to Eva herself. For the kind of editing we did eventually, one needs to have a thorough understanding of them.

I loved the lectures and felt “special” that I could be, with John, the first person to get my hands on them. Then one day, Eva declared that from now on, a capable young woman who lived and worked in the office at the Phoenicia Center, Eleni Mylonas, was going to edit the new lectures, since she was already re-editing the old ones, as they needed retyping for reproduction. I was upset about this change, and asked Eva to let John and I continue editing the lectures for free, to which she agreed (I used to get a session for each editing). Then I discovered that after John and I had finished our editing, they were edited some more at the office.

Since then, many people have pointed out deficiencies in these re-editings, which we had also noticed. A couple, only marginally involved with the Pathwork, was also hired by the Phoenicia office to help in typing and editing the lectures. It would take days of research to find examples of the deficiencies in their editing. Needless to say, these re-editings were done from the already re-edited lectures that were distributed at the time. Nobody went back to the earliest available copies. I am sure everybody did their best.

My point is only that no old lecture that you may read is “exactly how the Guide said it.” This includes also the very earliest available copies, of course. All of the editings, throughout the years, were done with the best of intentions, but the finished products generally did not come up to professional standards. Pathworkers often complained that they found it embarrassing to hand these lectures to some of their friends for this very reason.

And this is why eventually the then Trustees, sometime around 1990, decided to engage John and me to produce an authentic editing. We engaged a number of well-qualified Pathworkers with editing experience to assist us. For this, named the 1996 Edition, we of course used the earliest available copies, from ours or Eva’s files. .

Later still, recognizing that there was value in attempting to re-create the flavor and style of the earliest printed lectures, the Trustees commissioned Moira Shaw and her team to go back to the same source lectures we used, and edit them minimally to preserve as much of the flavor of those printed originals. These became known as the Unedited Lectures.

Personal Attachment to the Lectures

It is a psychological fact that people become attached to the version of a lecture they happen to read first. It’s the same thing with a favorite fairy tale or an interpretation of a piece of music. Depending on when people joined the Pathwork, they got variously edited and re-edited versions of the same lecture. There is no indication as to when and

by whom a particular lecture was edited; moreover, often the “original” lecture doesn’t even exist. For instance, Lectures 31 through 37, in the earliest versions that do exist, contain atrocious sentences and have no dates on them. I figured out the dates by doing some detective work. And none of them contain the Guide’s closing blessings. Why not? These lectures are not even very long, so it’s unlikely that the tapes ran out before the Guide got to the blessings. Did somebody decide that the blessings were superfluous? I miss these blessings, and sometimes I wonder whether we shouldn’t supply them. Would I be falsifying if I added, “Be in peace, be in God?”

But, to come back to my point, you may be attached to a particular version and even to a particular typeface or style, such as having certain key words typed in all caps, while that version in no way can be called the authentic one. Adrienne Lubeau once listened to a tape and typed out a lecture exactly as she heard it, and then compared that to the published lecture. There were quite some discrepancies. I still have both versions.

Why Did the Lectures Need Editing, Other than for Books to be Published?

For various reasons:

- (1) **Awkward, clumsy sentences.** Many of us “old-timers,” who had been reading the lectures for so long, slowly became immunized to sentences like, “So now your emotions already desire perfection, while this perfection is not yours as yet. Your emotions place you on a higher point than you have taken efforts to reach.” Obviously, this doesn’t read too well. John and I changed it to: “You desire perfection, while this perfection is not yours as yet. The desire is there because in your emotions you put yourself higher than the efforts you have so far taken would warrant.” This kind of editing is not a distortion of the Guide’s words, but a clarification of them. The early lectures, especially, abound with awkward sentences like the above, and much worse. While we straightened out such sentences, we were also careful to retain the flavor of every lecture as much as possible. This is only one type of editing we did throughout.
- (2) **Bad English.** “Both cannot function really well.” We changed that to “Neither can function really well.”
- (3) **Wrong expression.** “The captain needs a blueprint to keep his ship on the right course.” Obviously, the captain needs a chart. Or, in “the outer conflict is but the reflex of the inner one,” “reflex,” needs to be changed to “reflection.”
- (4) **Redundancies.** “It is not a question of how good you are or of how many weaknesses you still have that determines your self-respect.” Here we cut out “a question of.” This merely encumbered the sentence without adding anything to it. Another example of the judiciousness of simplification: “You may perhaps understand better now that just in the fact that you are unsuccessful for a time lies a great curative agent for something that is even more important than the actual weakness you are treating, namely, the learning of the right kind of shame and the

acceptance of yourself, thus learning humility, overcoming pride, and living in your own reality.” Edited to read: “You may perhaps understand now that you have a great curative agent for remedying something even more important than the actual weakness you are treating. You will learn the right kind of shame and self-acceptance, which teaches humility, the overcoming of pride, and shows you how to live in your own reality.” The sentence before the quote referred to being unsuccessful, so the context is clear to the reader.

- (5) **Replacing the “its” by the words they refer to.** “The greater the effort and the apparent difficulty in doing it,” was changed to, “the greater the effort and the apparent difficulty of recognizing the call and following it...” “It” abounds in the lectures and you often lose what “it” refers to by the time you reach the end of the sentence.
- (6) **Passive sentence structure.** Sentences like “It must be seen and no longer adhered to” need to be changed to “You will have to see your lower self and no longer adhere to it.”
- (7) **Words that don’t exist.** Sometimes one finds such, especially in the early lectures. They have to be caught. At the same time, the editors must not edit out the words that seem unfamiliar to the American ear, yet are completely good expressions. We did not flatten out the text by substituting a more usual term for a less usual one, like “melding” or “deem right.” Also, the Guide sometimes coins a word. Of course, we keep those.
- (8) **Words that exist but are typos.** One of these, “glow” instead of “flow” actually found its way into the published Bantam book (The Pathwork of Self-Transformation) in spite of all the checking by various proofreaders, including myself. We found “nature” instead of “mature” in one of the old lectures, “live” instead of “love,” etc.
- (9) **Limping metaphors.** “This defensive wall breeds the very unfulfillment...” Obviously, a wall cannot breed. So we replaced it with a more abstract word, “generates.”
- (10) **Cutting.** Sometimes whole sentences, or parts of sentences, need to be cut, partly because exactly the same words occur soon before or after. At other times the Guide suddenly, in the middle of a sentence, will refer to something that does not quite belong there and that will divert the attention from following a line of argument. I think this happens as the Guide attempts to translate into human language the multidimensional communication system of the spirit world, where the present includes past and future or, rather, there is no time dimension. The simultaneity of thought that the Guide tries to convey does not work on paper. Whatever we cut to keep the line of thought clear appears again, or has already appeared.

- (11) **Inconsistencies.** In one early lecture, in answer to a question, the Guide distinguishes between a feeling and an emotion. In later lectures, the two words are used interchangeably. It was impossible to sort this out, so we left it as it was. Or, the use of “subconscious” and “unconscious.” At the beginning, the Guide used “subconscious,” and even explained the difference between the “subconscious” and the “unconscious,” – except that he defined these two terms in exactly the opposite way from current and universally accepted usage. Later on, he always used “unconscious,” as Eva learned the vocabulary of psychoanalysis. We decided to change “subconscious” to “unconscious,” though we may have left a few in because we didn’t make this decision early enough in the editing project.
- (12) **Limping Idioms.** Idioms which are used, but not in quite the correct form, such as “black on white,” which is the exact translation of the German “schwarz auf weiss,” instead of “in black and white.” These had to be fixed.
- (13) **Weirdnesses.** Some of these were consistently reprinted and continued to raise eyebrows for thirty years. They were not touched out of the mistaken belief that “this is how the Guide said it.” For instance, on the first page of lecture # 30, the Guide talks about the nature of “this communication.” One of the sentences reads, “I could give a more thorough explanation of why it would be impossible for a human being, still in the cycle of incarnations, to bring out the knowledge I can put through simply by going into a trance.” I remember various discussions in which we were wondering, now why would the Guide have said that he was going into a trance? Well, what it means is poor editing. “The medium” or “the instrument” needs to be inserted between “by” and “going” to make the statement correct.
- (14) **Avoiding the generic use of “man.”** This is a delicate point, which is of utmost importance. The avoidance of the use of “man” and “he” to include both man and woman is by now editorial policy at all major newspapers, magazines, and book publishers. It is amazing how fast this practice has taken root. Of course, it is much easier to write an original piece without using a form that is becoming obsolete than editing existing material. It is especially difficult with the lectures, where the Guide so often points out that what he speaks about applies to the whole human race. Yet too many peoples’ sensitivities are offended today when “man” and “he” are used in the old sense for us to ignore the need for moving in that direction as we edit the lectures. Since it is clear that the Guide was in no way “sexist,” but merely used, through Eva, the then current vocabulary, it is not a falsification to substitute “people,” “the human being,” “humans,” “one,” or “you” for “man” and “he.” Actually, the Guide himself mixes up all these forms, often in the same paragraph.

One needs to be careful which form to use when making these changes. Sometimes changing to “you” makes the most fluent reading. I am very aware that the super-computer in our brain reacts with a different response to “man” than to “you.” But if one makes clear that the Guide is talking about the overall human

condition by beginning the sentences with “All human beings,” or “You human beings,” or if one indicates in some other way that the “you” is plural and all-inclusive, the meaning is not distorted. At other times, it is clear that “man” is only used as a turn of phrase, interchangeably with “one,” or “you” (in the singular). John and I felt committed to making such changes when the only other alternative would be to leave whole paragraphs speaking about what “man” does. It just doesn’t feel right anymore.

Our purpose was to make the lectures as widely accessible as possible. We want to reach those people who are open to the great changes that are taking place in the world and that have already begun to manifest in astonishing ways. The people who are receptive to teachings that demand such depth of self-awareness and commitment as the Pathwork are relatively small in number compared to the masses of unaware and other-blaming people. Those who are open and whom we could reach – and this is our mission – fall into a definite category. Many of them are women. They are well-educated, eager to learn more, are moving out into the world, are interested in spiritual and psychological teachings, and are committed to their newly-awakened self-respect and identity as women whose value is equal to that of men. These women need to be given the respect of non-discriminatory language.

To equalize is one of the tasks of the New Age movement. Inclusion, the elimination of discrimination in all areas of life, is the key element under the Aquarian constellation of universal sister/brotherhood. Since the Guide is one of the greatest birthers of the New Age, it would be undermining and counteracting the spirit of his teachings if we didn’t eliminate some of the hurdles that might obscure his message to a great number of people. I believe we would lose many potential followers of the Guide’s teachings if we disregarded this issue. I also believe that this aspect of the editing is so important that it far outweighs the risk of slightly changing the emphasis of some sentences. I want to make it clear that this is not “selling out” to a passing feminist fad. The nonsexist language is here to stay.

The Guide himself changed tactics, if I may use this word, to target his audience. Let’s take a look at the changes in the Guide’s greetings throughout the years.

From Lecture #11 through #48: “Greetings in the name of the Lord.” “Greetings in the name of God and Jesus Christ.” Then there is a sudden change. #49: “Greetings, my friends. God bless all of you, every one of you.” #50: “Greetings, my dearest friends. God bless this gathering. God bless all of you.” This then becomes the manner of greeting, except for #52, #53, and #54, which revert to, “in the name of God.” Then, after #58, it becomes, “Greetings. I bring you blessings. Blessed is this hour, my dearest friends,” and variations thereof, such as “I greet you with divine blessings.” (Only in #248 does the Guide return to greeting us in the name of Jesus Christ.)

To leave out for eighteen years “the Lord” and “Jesus Christ” and often even “God” from his greetings must have been a decision made by the Guide and his

committee in the spirit world. They foresaw that otherwise many human beings who would be ready for these teachings and who would arrive, through them, to the acceptance of Jesus Christ and God, might refuse to listen to the lectures because of their ignorance or prejudice. He was still speaking in the name of God, but it was not important to say so. By cutting down the frequency of the generic use of “man” we are doing exactly the same thing. We are helping those who would be turned off by this apparently discriminatory, or at least insensitive language. You cannot expect people who read the lectures for the first time to always tell themselves, “well, these were delivered forty years ago, so let’s not worry about it.” The Guide’s message is contemporary – urgently contemporary – and must be clothed in contemporary language.

About 15 years ago I asked Pat Rodegast to give us an Emmanuel reading on the subject of editing the Guide’s lectures. Joy Hubert and Irving Warhaftig were present. I asked him specifically about editing out the generic use of “man.” Emmanuel was very much in favor of it. He spoke with such love and wisdom in the name of Oneness that I felt lifted up into a dimension where all controversy could be resolved in a most harmonious way.

But what is the most important issue? Will those who encounter the Guide’s teachings through the new, lucidly edited versions, get a different message? Will they not understand what the Pathwork is all about? Will they not wish to burrow through their masks and lower selves to reach their Godselfes? Will they not understand the predicament of living in a state of duality? Will they not be able to find their images? Will they not understand the principle of self-responsibility? Will they not sigh in relief that finally they are shown a way to deal with the evil within? Just the contrary (as the Guide would say). People will understand these principles and methods better, as all the compliments I received for the editing of the Bantam book testify.

We are competing for the attention of the same group of people who are besieged by thousands of well-written, well-edited, and attractively presented publications in the fields of spirituality, psychology, and metaphysics. We must be lucid for their sake as well as our own, so that they can find what they are looking for: the tools of self-transformation not to be found elsewhere.

Through various inspirations and guidances, the leaders of the Pathwork have decided to move the Pathwork out. To quote from the guidance in Donovan Thesenga’s letter to the participants of the first International Leadership Conference: “The Pathwork is at the threshold of a major expansion of its task...the world is ready for and eagerly awaiting your message.”

Our message has to be clear.

Different principles apply to a spoken lecture than to material expected to be read. The audience develops a rapport with the speaker. Therefore, repetitions, hesitations, imperfect sentences and some confusing rhetoric are accepted. Orally delivered

material almost always has to be edited for publication, because reading is so different from listening. The Guide lectures are no exception to this rule. Many people will send for or download individual lectures who have no emotional connection to Eva, to our centers, or to other Pathworkers – factors which, in our cases, make it easier to disregard the clumsiness of some of the transcripts. When these factors don't apply, it is even more important to make the lectures available in a form that fits the high level of their content.

One more point: it will take a long time before all the lectures are translated into various languages and made available in people's native tongues. The English language, however, has become the language of the world. In the liberated political atmosphere of the countries which used to be sealed off behind the Iron Curtain, there is a passion for learning English. The study of the lectures is difficult enough without having to struggle through awkwardly formulated sentences. We owe clarity and legibility also to many non-native English readers into whose hands the lectures will come.

I am well aware that in spite of the most careful and conscientious editing, not every single solution is optimal. But the guidelines on which the entire editing process is based are sound and necessary. I am convinced that the 1996 Edition is a credit to the Pathwork and that they are an essential part of the new phase into which we are moving.