

On the Authors and Their Writings

This document provides a framework for understanding and contextualizing the texts of PB and other spiritual authors. Its main axes are:

- the complexity of translation
- the historical manipulation of ancient texts
- the need for inclusive language
- the presence of contradictions and authoritative tones
- the pedagogical value of repetition
- the underlying unity beneath thematic divisions
- and the coexistence of levels of teaching

All of this invites a critical, flexible, and deep reading, oriented toward grasping the **essential intention** rather than literal wording.

1. Translation between English and Spanish: complexity and limits

Translation is an inherently complex process. Sometimes there can be significant differences in meaning between different translations. English, moreover, is not uniform: it varies by region, history, and cultural usage. Each word also acquires different nuances depending on the territory.

Every translator inevitably adds their own style, preferences, and interpretation. For this reason, absolute fidelity to the original is difficult to guarantee. The final recommendation is clear: always verify the source text whenever doubt arises.

2. Historical manipulations of ancient texts

PB warns about the distortions, interpolations, and omissions that have affected numerous religious and philosophical texts over the centuries. Many of PB's writings discuss this. We have selected two sample notes:

"The farther we get from the Prophet's time, the more difficult it becomes to discover exactly what he taught. Sects multiply in his name, each with a different doctrine. Imaginations and interpolations, distortions and caricatures become part of the received teaching. As if this were not enough, personal ambitions and institutional exploitations add to the confusion."

"Such grave and great distortions, interpolations, and eradications have some scriptures undergone in the course of their history and manipulation, it is no wonder that sects compete in common ignorance with one another."

The main causes PB himself mentions include:

- errors in oral transmission
- literal translations of metaphors
- institutional interests
- doctrinal reinterpretations
- memory failures in oral tradition
- political impositions

The cases of Jesus and Buddha illustrate this issue: they spoke languages different from those in which their teachings were later recorded. PB insists on distinguishing between **the historical Jesus and the symbolic Christ**, and on recognizing the inevitable mixture of authentic and added elements.

It is important to note that PB does not use these arguments to discredit traditions, but rather to encourage critical reading.

3. Inclusive language and gender bias

Regarding gendered language in PB's literature: Paul Brunton typically used the masculine form because that was the literary convention at the time he wrote. Needless to say, his writings were undoubtedly intended for everyone—regardless of gender—who was interested in reading them.

Other authors: generally speaking, the same applies as with PB

4. Contradictions, inaccuracies, and tone of authority

In extensive works, it is not unusual to find apparent contradictions or statements that may generate confusion. At times, PB refers to certain assertions made by others or by himself in earlier writings and, upon recognizing that they require greater precision, he clarifies or qualifies them to make them more understandable to the reader.

PB wrote from different life periods and levels of understanding, which explains part of the variation. He himself admitted: *"I have written many things in my earlier books which I now wish I had never written."*

When a statement seems excessive, contradictory, or imprecise, the most advisable approach is:

- put judgment on hold for a moment,
- continue reading the text, as clarification may be provided later,
- or try to grasp the overall meaning of a specific message, despite noticing a possible "inaccuracy" in the text.

Regarding style, PB acknowledges:

"It is not my fault if my style insists on sounding forth an authoritative and prophetic tone. I do not create it by any act of will. It is as if some ethereal presence stands behind the mind and bids me utter its message."

And referring to certain messages, he says, speaking in the third person:

"PB could not communicate such discoveries as a matter for doubt or for settlement by discussion. He can communicate them only with a tone of authority and in an atmosphere of surety, for this is how he himself received them."

5. Deliberate repetitions

As explained in a previous document (*About The Notebooks by the PBPF*), repetition is a traditional pedagogical resource, especially in the East. PB explains it this way:

"It was an ancient Oriental style which was really a special method of illuminative teaching and a tested means of assisting the mind to open tight-fitting or obdurate closed doors, and of becoming aware of hitherto unperceived truths or getting to understand more easily what was before hard to understand."

Repetition allows:

- opening resistant "mental doors,"
 - showing a concept from different angles,
 - reinforcing essential ideas.
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6. Thematic divisions, interconnections, and overlaps

Although texts are organized by themes, **all spiritual knowledge points to a single Reality**. Divisions are pedagogical tools, not ontological separations. Many texts fit simultaneously into several categories, and any numerical order is merely a practical device.

We may summarize it this way: In the deepest essence of knowledge... there exists only a single vision, a cohesive and harmonious whole. Divisions are *maps*, not *territories*.

7. Different levels of exposition of knowledge

Authors alternate between:

- **the absolute point of view** (only the Ultimate Reality exists),
- **the relative point of view** (ego, world, karma, destiny, reincarnation).

It is important for the reader to learn to recognize from which level each author is speaking in each passage. The doctrine of **Mentalism** offers the key to understanding how both levels can be simultaneously valid.
