

Communication: Jean Overton Fuller's Response to Govert Schüller Regarding the Krishnamurti-Scott-Anrias Issue

Govert Schüller

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Introduction

In the summer of 2006 I discussed with some Theosophical friends the [paper on Narayan](#) on which I was working then (1). As we knew that Jean was getting frail we came to the conclusion that it would be fair to send her my draft in order for her to be able to respond if she so wished. At that moment the basic argument of the paper, i.e. that Narayan could not be identified with Nagaratnaswami, was already fully formulated and argued. She promptly sent me the rejoinder above [below], dated August 12, 2006, with the request to have it published with the paper. In April of 2007 I send her another draft, which only differed from the first one in that it had much more additional material, though with the basic argument unchanged. I did receive a much shorter response, which was substantially not different from the first. I did not respond formally to her rejoinder because I was waiting for the article to be published first, which did not happen till December 2009, as Prof. Santucci was very busy with the workload of being chair of his department.

Meanwhile Jean passed away in April of 2009 and so she was never able to read the final product, though it was not that different from the April 2007 draft. This puts me in the slightly awkward situation of debating an issue while my opponent is not there anymore. What to do? I could just leave her response as the last word, or, and I toyed with that idea, I could develop her position further, out of deference to her, with possible additional reasons and maybe some documented facts. Not unlike a chess player helping out his opponent to increase the level of the game. But, rereading her response, I think the fairest course would be to give both my straight answer and to develop further some of her ideas, especially her "erroneous projection" thesis. Giving a straight answer might not be that easy, because her letter is not clearly structured in its argumentation and is not addressing the core of my argument. So, I will have to read between the lines and hope that if I make a factual mistake or a fallacious argument somebody will point that out.

1. [Editor's Note: The article appeared in *Theosophical History*, Vol. XIV, No. 1-2 (Jan.-Apr. 2008): 11-46.]

Jean Overton Fuller to Govert Schüller

21 August 06

Dear Govert Schuller,

Thank you for sending me a copy of your paper. If you are getting it published, please add to it my rejoinder, herewith enclosed.

[signed] Jean

Jean Overton Fuller

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Such an array of names and dates makes me dizzy, and rather than take up each point separately I think it will be better if I just state my own position, which appears to have been misunderstood. I do believe in the Masters. I have always done so. It was Leadbeater's book *The Masters and the Path* which brought me into the Theosophical Society. But I see the point

being made by Krishnamurti. He never said the Masters did not exist or that there was anything wrong with them. He did say that in claiming inspiration from a being one had not met on the physical plane there is always the danger one may get him wrong. If one misquotes someone, one knows on the physical plane he call pull one up, say no he did not say that, he is being misrepresented. But where the alleged communicator is not known on the physical plane, anything can be projected on to him, unchecked, and there is the danger - terribly real - that one may be projecting on to him pet ideas of one's own that happen to be erroneous. This indeed is what I believe happened with Anrias. He knows that Wood made more than one visit to India, that on the first he met a blind man of great wisdom. On his return, some years later he learned that his old friend had died. Anrias now came on the scene and claimed to have got in touch with this wise man, psychically, but the ideas he projects on to him show so grievous a misunderstanding of Krishnamurti's point that it can only come from Anrias's own misunderstanding.

I have nevertheless read his sketches of the Masters with interest, especially the one on the third, whom he says was Paolo Veronese. I had thought he might have been Albrecht Durer, whose self-portrait is so very full of occult symbols. See my article on this.

However, in the year Durer died Veronese was born so, though we have not the date, it seems possible Durer reincarnated as Veronese - who did move to Venice.

He sees Hilarion as having been St. Paul. So do I, but I wish he would not connect him with modern Spiritualism. A better connection would have been Christian Science. Founded in 1875, the same year as the Theosophical Society, it would well have formed an alternative expression of the centennial impulse for those whose temperaments channeled them more towards the Masters Jesus and Hilarion.

Jean Overton Fuller

Govert Schüller's response to Jean Overton Fuller

First, I'm not sure which of her positions she is referring to as being misunderstood by me. It initially seems to be about if I understood correctly or not that she and Krishnamurti believed in the existence of the Masters, as she explicitly confirms her own belief and makes the case Krishnamurti did so also. If that is the case then I have to say that I nowhere put her or K's belief into question, which I would not do in the first place because I know they both indeed have professed that belief, nor would I have any reason to bring their belief into doubt as it is not relevant to any of the arguments in my paper. Or, and this is another possibility, she thinks I misunderstood what she thinks was the actual nature of the interaction between the blind yogi and Anrias, with her position that Anrias somehow psychically contacted the yogi after his death, but then projected all his misunderstandings of Krishnamurti unto the sage, while my understanding of her position was that the two never could have met as the adept had surely died before Anrias came to India and that therefore Anrias' *Mahatmic* messenger was as fictional as Fuller thought that Scott's characters were. If this would be the case, then I have to say that it is only here in the above rejoinder that she makes for the first time the explicit charge of Anrias projecting errors unto a real, albeit deceased, yogi. In her Krishnamurti biography she clearly implies that the crucial flaw in the Anrias claim of meeting the sage and receiving the criticisms of Krishnamurti was to be found in the fact that the sage had died, not that there was a possible post-mortem connection with erroneous projections as she stated above.

Now, for arguments sake, let's accept her "erroneous projection" thesis and see how her other facts fare. The first (slightly) problematic idea is that she just posits without supporting facts or reasoning that Anrias knew that Wood had been in India and met the blind yogi in 1910. This is

of course not impossible and to give a helping hand I would argue that, because Anrias lived at Adyar for around two years, from 1925 till 1927, he could have met Ernest Wood there and heard firsthand the story of the blind yogi from him. I did not find any confirming evidence that Wood was actually in Adyar in those years though. On the contrary. Leadbeater's biographer Gregory Tillett places Wood at the Manor in Sydney in the summer of 1925 with Leadbeater and from 1928 on as his close co-worker and he is not mentioned as part of the Leadbeater party going to the 1925 Theosophical Society golden jubilee (*The Elder Brother*, pp. 218, 220 & 244). The other possibility is that Anrias might have heard from other Theosophists at Adyar the story of the blind yogi, as there had been this discussion about the possibility that this yogi was Narayan and if he was *Mahatma* Morya's guru or pupil.

A graver problem is Fuller's supposed timeline in stating that Anrias came on the scene after Wood had learned the yogi had died. Wood wrote in 1936 that he had passed by the yogi's village in 1933 and heard only then he had died. Anrias' messages from the yogi were published in 1932 a full year *before* Wood could have passed on this knowledge. As in her Krishnamurti biography, her Anrias chronology is somewhat sloppy.

Anyway, in the end, the strength of her arguments is quite problematic in the light of the fact that Wood's blind sage could not be equated with Anrias' Rishi, a central issue she unfortunately did not address.

Having said that, is there a chance that by a little tweaking here and there one could salvage her thesis that the origin of Anrias' criticisms of Krishnamurti had their origin in erroneous projections unto a meta-empirical Mahatmic character? Well, to begin, the Wood material on Nagaratnaswami will probably have to be tossed and then sources in which some of the Narayan material was presented will have to be found, which were plausibly available to Anrias either in India during his stay there between 1918 and 1927 and/or in Great Britain in the 1927-1932 period when he was there leading up to his publication of *Through the Eyes of the Masters*. Strong candidate sources would be Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol I (1895); Bailey's *Initiation* (1922); Leadbeater's *Lives* (1923) and *The Masters and the Path* (1925); and Besant's Agastya revelations in *The Theosophist* (1929). All of them probably should have been quite easily available to anybody moving in Theosophical circles either in India or Great Britain in those days. And it would provide enough material to get the idea of the existence of this important master who might be contacted psychically and might provide deep answers to the Krishnamurti conundrum, though the answers received, according to Jean, were erroneous projections.

The possibility also remains, Theosophically speaking, that Scott and Anrias were genuine contactees and that their critique of Krishnamurti was esoterically correct. Somewhere else I argued that the fact that their ideas did not have much traction in the Adyar TS was due to Adyar Theosophists suffering from a variation of post-traumatic stress disorder triggered by the failed world teacher project. The variation is abused person syndrome with Krishnamurti in the role of abuser by bashing both Theosophy and Theosophists and Adyar Theosophists (with notable exceptions like Leadbeater, Scott, Anrias and Hodson) in the role of abused ones idealizing the abuser and rationalizing the abuse as justified. (See "[The State of the TS \(Adyar\) in 2008: A Psycho-esoteric Interpretation](#)" [accessed July 23, 2010])

Alternately, in order to give all metaphysical positions their due, it could be argued--taking a materialist-reductionist position--that both Anrias and Scott just made it all up as there are neither masters to be contacted nor psychic means to do so. Maybe they thought they had to do some Platonic "noble lying" to save the Adyar Theosophists from Krishnamurti's iconoclasm, or they were pranksters with a deviant sense of humor, or they were just delusional, with their

sensitive, creative, over-imaginative minds impregnated with Theosophical fantasies which had originated with the arch-fantasiist and highly accomplished hypnotist, stage magician, forger and fraudster, Madame Blavatsky herself. For now I'm still with Scott and Anrias, though the last possibility is gaining plausibility in my mind as I'm trying to think through the implications of the many dubious historical claims made by Blavatsky and will have to revalue the basic assumptions on which Theosophy rests, which I have not sufficiently done. This will have to be investigated very seriously, even if only it enables a deeper understanding (to bring it back again to the main protagonist in this issue) of Krishnamurti's possibly justified wholesale rejection of Theosophy in the late 1920s and his possibly opportunistic rapprochement with Adyar in the 1980s.

All the above lines of possible inquiry are provisional hypotheses for which the appropriate methodologies have not yet firmly been established. It might look like as if I am moving into a more reductionist etic position, but that is not true. What I am looking for is a methodology, which navigates between the poles of both axiomatic materialism and religionism, including the Theosophical variant. In this context I like to bring to the attention of both academics and Theosophists the reflections of K Paul Johnson on his experiences in investigating Theosophy and the methodological issues involved in his article "[Historian as Heretic: Conflicting Perspectives on Theosophical History.](#)"

Interestingly, the philosopher whom Johnson found most helpful in thinking through these methodological questions is also the one who was asked by the Krishnamurti Foundation of America to edit an anthology of Krishnamurti's writings, which would be geared towards academic philosophers and students of philosophy, and also wrote a small philosophical study about Krishnamurti's teachings. See Raymond Martin *The Elusive Messiah: A Philosophical Overview of the Quest for the Historical Jesus* (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 2000); *Krishnamurti: Reflections on the Self*, edited by Raymond Martin (Chicago and LaSalle, IL.: Open Court, 1997); and *On Krishnamurti*. Wadsworth Philosophers Series (Belmont, Ca.: Wadsworth Publishing, 2003).

Govert Schuller

Naperville

July 27, 2010