

SEMINAR at Wisdom's Goldenrod, Hector, NY
with Anthony Damiani (AD)
July 16, 1984
MATTER; KNOWING WILLING FEELING

TOPIC: Matter

SUBJECT: Knowing Willing Feeling

SUBSUBJECTS: Murti, Hinduism, Plotinus, Plato

CONTENTS:

AD drops in for lunch during class

Reading T.R.V. Murti, *Studies in Indian Thought*, on matter and illusion

AD: Murti is saying that the wisdom that arranges Ideas into forms is a confusion; this is strange language

AD comments in reference to getting some coffee that the craving for existence is gone, it won't become a habit

Discussion continues regarding Plotinus' notion of matter as potentiality

AS: matter is the fact that an appearance can appear as other than Intelligible

Creation of appearance is not false; otherwise Second World War is a false appearance

You can watch the way knowing willing feeling operate to *produce* something; certain aspects give rise to certain ideas

Matter as receptacle

Student shares her impressions of and notes from WG Class 1983 0713

Knowing willing feeling can be combined in an endless number of ways to produce new ideas/appearances; this vast potentiality is the sheer indeterminacy of matter; creation out of nothing in your consciousness

BOOKS READ FROM OR REFERENCED:

- T.R.V. Murti, *Studies in Indian Thought*, "Illusion as Confusion of Subjective Functions"; "Knowing, Feeling and Willing as Functions of Consciousness"
- Plotinus, *The Enneads* (MacKenna translation, 4th ed.)

NOTES:

- This is a seminar on matter. AD is not present for most of it but he drops in for lunch and talks for a little bit. This is the only fragment I transcribe. I do not transcribe anything from Audio File 1984 0716b as AD is not present.
- This seminar continues the discussion started in WG Class 1984 0713a.

TRANSCRIBED Verbatim by IT 2021. **Archival verbatim transcript – V11a.**

AUDIO FILES: 1984 0716a. [Note: “Tape” refers to original audio cassette tapes that were later digitized into .MP3 Audio Files.]

1984 07/16 SEMINAR at Wisdom's Goldenrod Matter; Knowing Willing Feeling

[Audio File 1984 0716a Begins, 1:09:15.4]

AS: Hi. Oh just in time and you-- (some laughter)

S (very faint): (Avery--)

S: Uh-hm.

AS: That's--

AD: There's still a little left. (bit of laughter)

AS/S(?): What's that?

AD: No. Alright, go ahead.

CDA: Is there another chair?

S: Well--

AS (simultaneously): He could have mine. (AS laughs a bit)

AD: I can go sit (in another's) chair.

S: Here's one Red.

AD: I want all of them.

S (faint): I was thinking [one word inaudible]

AD: (Roam/Rome). (bit of laughter)

[short pause]

AS: Ok--

[Transcriber note: I am using *Studies in Indian Thought* by T.R.V. Murti, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1983.]

T.R.V. Murti [*Studies in Indian Thought*, "2.2 Illusion as Confusion of Subjective Functions," p. 38, AS reading]: "On our view, matter is the confusion or self-alienation of forms, not an independent or self-sufficient entity, the confusion itself not another form. If it were so, there is nothing to prevent it from persisting in the full light of discrimination..."

AD: He's saying that the wisdom that you-- arranges the Ideas into forms is a confusion, right?

AS: Yeah. Well, here we go [one word inaudible]

AD (simultaneously): Strange language he's (using).

AS: Right.

T.R.V. Murti [*Studies in Indian Thought*, “2.2 Illusion as Confusion of Subjective Functions,” p. 38, AS reading]: “...to discriminate is to dispel confusion. Primordial illusion or matter is the utter lack of all determination...”

AS: Well that’s fine.

T.R.V. Murti [*Studies in Indian Thought*, “2.2 Illusion as Confusion of Subjective Functions,” p. 38, AS reading]: “Empirical illusions are determinate...”

AD: In other words, the pure potentiality of the Ideas to create. Boy, let me go back. I’m better off having parted. (laughter)

AS: We-- we weren’t really doing [AD simultaneously: I can’t read--] the article, come back, come back.

CDA (simultaneously): Um, quote-- quote that--

AD (simultaneously): [one word inaudible] metaphysics.

S (faint): Oh.

AS: We weren’t-- Anthony, we weren’t really doing this article, we-- we’re just trying to talk about Plotinus’ notion of matter as potentiality. You know, we brought this in too.

AD: No that’s useful, I mean, it shows the East and the West.

AS: Ok well, now that you’re here we can-- (laughter) Um, ok.

S: Well--

CDA (simultaneously): I suppose you’d like some (coffee)?

AD: It’s over there, isn’t it?

CDA: It’s um-- no, you can’t have this.

AD/S(?): Why not? (laughter)

RW: Should be making (him a)--

CDA (simultaneously): ’Cause it’s really bad, it’s bad.

AD (simultaneously): The craving for existence is gone, don’t worry.

CDA: No, it’s bad.

AD (simultaneously): It won’t become a habit.

CDA (simultaneously): I’m making some more coffee. (RW laughs) I’ll make you some like real coffee.

AD: There’s no need. You see all the disturbance? I’m going. (laughter)

RW (amidst laughter): No, no, no, no, come back, come back, come back.

AD: I really came for lunch but I think--

AS: Little early.

AD: Little early.

CDA: Ok but then you have to wait till after lunch to have coffee.

AD: Yeah.

AS: Will you be here for lunch, we'll make you some coffee.

S (faint): (No worries/Don't worry).

AD: Sit down and do your (talk).

CDA (simultaneously): Sorry, I'm sorry.

AS: So, destroying that notion of matter (AS laughing, some laughter) that we used to have. No what-- what I was trying to do is--

CDA: Yeah Avery, I knew it was-- (CDA laughs)

AS: No, no, it-- it wa-- I mean-- Just leave him alone. Let's just go on and-- 'cause--

CDA: So, he sa-- [AS simultaneously: Ok.] if he just-- Anthony just said that the-- the confusion, what he's calling-- what this guy's calling the confusion is the wisdom.

AS (simultaneously): Is a confusion.

CDA: Is the wisdom that's combining the Ideas.

AS (simultaneously): Ok. But in one [CDA simultaneously: So--] sense it is, but in one sense it isn't. It's-- in the sense that yes, there is a wisdom which is determining which Ideas are going to be actualized.

CDA (simultaneously): And you can say those are the three functions of the soul, those-- those three functions are-- [AS: Right, sure.] are on degrees and [AS simultaneously: Oh.] those-- and they're combining those degrees in [AS simultaneously: Right.] a specific way.

AS (simultaneously): And obviously there's a provident-- a providence that is [CDA simultaneously: Right, right, right.] determining which things-- and number, and [CDA simultaneously: Right, right.] that's the way we spoke of number too.

CDA: So--

AS: But see that's-- that's from the side of intelligibility, it's a funny thing. From the side of intelligibility there's a great wisdom which is actually doing the arranging. It's not arbitrary or anything like that and it's not indeterminate. Ok, but, the fact that this appearance can appear as other now, that's got to be what they mean by matter. Now that is not on the side of form.

CDA: And-- and then--

AS: Give-- given that the matter is going to allow something to appear, what is organizing the appearance has to be the Intelligible, the form. [CDA simultaneously: Right, yeah.] And given that not everything can

manifest at once there's a divine wisdom which is going to determine what exactly-- what Ideas are going to manifest, which functions are going to be operative and so on. Ok? But in order for the appearance to happen, ok, the thing must be able to appear as other and it can't appear in the-- in-- as the Intelligible.

CDA: Ok. Now, I thought that-- [AS: Yeah.] that the discussion was leading on Friday night [Note: Reference to WG Class 1984 0713.] that if you take this in terms of the thoughts in our mind that there's a-- that-- that there's actually-- matter is the possibility that there could be-- that the Ideas could manifest as a thought within my mind. Now, first of all is that a proper unfoldment of this, you know, a proper next step?

AS: Could manifest as a thought.

CDA (simultaneously): That-- that the-- the combina-- the Ideas are combined, ok. This is-- this is due to providential wisdom though. [AS simultaneously: Yeah but--] That the way that-- [AS: Right.] the-- the [AS simultaneously: The way--] possibilities of-- of the ways that the Ideas can be combined [AS simultaneously: (Well--/Right.)] is already contained in the Intelligible World, right.

AS (simultaneously): Ok, but let's not say [CDA simultaneously: That's not what we're talking about.] the possibility, let's say the actual form of combination.

CDA (simultaneously): Ok, I'm sorry, I used the wrong word.

AS: Yeah, but the [CDA simultaneously: Ok.] actual form of combination, but--

CDA: Ok. But the fact that when these Ideas are combined, they-- this combination takes a peculiar form within my mind that is usually false and not true, that is usually confused and not clear.

AD (simultaneously): It's not false.

AS: No.

AD: If-- the creation [CDA simultaneously: Well--] of appearance is not false.

AS: Right.

CDA (simultaneously): Well I'm saying that the thought, the way that the thought gets transformed by my thinking it is false in comparison [AD simultaneously: Gives rise to an appearance.] to what it is in itself.

AS (simultaneously): No, no.

AD: Gives rise to an appearance, why call [CDA simultaneously: Be--] it false.

AS (simultaneously): No, the--

CDA: But that's not the point of view that I'm taking. I understand what you're saying, that the appearance-- the *factness* of the-- of appearance is not false, that's the world.

AD: Well what's false then is that it's not ultimate reality? Who the hell is talking about ultimate reality?

CDA: Well, I'm just that--

AS (simultaneously): Right, it's an appearance.

CDA: Ok.

AS: But the question-- I think the question we want to ask is--

AD: Just like the Second World War is an appearance, therefore it's false. [CDA: Yeah I would--] [AS assents] And sixty million people's lives that were destroyed is meaningless, that's [AS simultaneously: Right.] what the logical Vedantist comes up with.

AS: No. But-- but the question that we were really addressing, Carol, is what role is matter playing in allowing the [CDA simultaneously: Right.] appearance to appear at all.

CDA: And I was-- I was trying to address that.

AS: Yeah. Well that's the question I think, what do we mean by matter.

CDA (simultaneously): And I was trying-- Ok, let's leave out mistakes or falsehood or anything. Can I-- can this exa-- can this example be brought down to the fact that my mind has thoughts, that's what I wanted to ask you.

AS: Which exa-- you mean the one that he's doing here?

CDA (simultaneously): Fact that-- yeah, I mean-- yeah.

AS: Can this be brought down to the fact that my mind has thoughts.

CDA: Yeah but there's-- there's an appearance. It's on that level.

AD: You keep it up, you're not going to get any lunch Carol.

AS: It's not an individual-- it doesn't-- it could even be the-- it doesn't even have to be my mind, it could be the cosmic mind having thoughts, has thoughts too.

CDA: So it's the possibility, the potentiality of thoughts to arise in (water).

AS (simultaneously): It's the potentiality of appearance. And again, to me-- I-- the appearance-- I-- well, I don't know.

CDA: Why can't you just say thoughts, I mean, that's what I'm asking.

AS (simultaneously): Ok.

CDA: Why-- can you-- instead of appearance, can you say thought.

[short pause]

AD: Hey look at that, 7-Up.

S (simultaneously, faint): Ok.

AD: That's good.

CDA (simultaneously): 'Cause that's the--

AS (faint): Go on.

AD/S(?) (faint): Good.

CDA: It's got your name on it too.

[13¾ second pause]

AD: It's very nice.

AD/S(?): He's comfortable.

RW: Great.

S: Uh-hm.

CDA/S(?) (faint): It's very (comfortable).

RW (simultaneously): I've never seen her so good.

CDA/S(?): Oh boy.

CDA: Put that chair over there. You want to give (it/him)--

S (faint): Here, use this one.

[few seconds of background student talking]

AD: You look like a tennis player dressed in white, you got a racquet with you?

CDA: I spilled coffee all over me. [10 second pause] So I-- I was just trying to pu-- push it through and maybe it's like totally wrong context, that if you say that-- that matter is the potentiality for the mind to have thoughts, and that the three functions are the way that these thoughts are going to actually be given intelligibility to the mind, that that was a way to approach it.

[15 second pause]

AS (faint): Well-- [18¾ second pause] Hm. I--

[short pause]

CDA: I mean you could just-- I mean I don't-- I don't m-- I didn't do it. (CDA laughing)

AS: Maybe I don't quite understand what you're saying yet.

CDA: Well I just thought that was the way that was going on Friday night was that-- that we were going to actually be able to see how it's actually happening in our very minds, you know.

AS: How what's happening?

CDA: How knowing, willing, and feeling are-- how we're-- if we could-- louder.

AD: You can't see them but maybe you could watch the way they operate to *produce* something.

CDA: That's-- well that's what I-- I--

AD: That's what we were trying to [AS simultaneously: Yeah.] do when we were reading charts.

CDA (simultaneously): Yeah, yeah.

AS: Uh-hm.

AD: You see a man has certain aspects and you see certain ideas arise in his mind.

AS: Right. But, [CDA assents] see the thing-- the problem is-- I don't know, it's not a problem but, this is clearly the way that the Ideas are being manifested in your experience through these three functions. Ok? And this-- and-- but, the-- on the other side, and this is on the side of intelligibility 'cause these-- this is talking about the three possible modes in which you could relate to an Idea in order for it to be manifested. But, on the other side, we're saying in order for there to be an appearance, there's this other factor that we spoke about as this pure potentiality or matter. Now that's-- on that side it's saying there couldn't be an appearance at all if there weren't for this potentiality of otherness because then you would just have the Intelligible. [student assents, faint] Ok? Something needs to like pop out or stand out from the Intelligible as something other. Now, the fact that it is what it is or what's ordering the appearances, *what* you're going to experience, the mode of the functioning, all that is on the side of intelligibility. But just the fact *that* something can pop out as other and not be the Intelligible-- for (somebody) appearance means [CDA assents] other, means separate [CDA simultaneously: That's clear.] from, means exis-- [CDA assents] to stand out from. And matter is what's allowing that to-- what they're calling matter, as I understand it, is what-- is the potentiality for that to happen. Now that includes the potentiality for various functions which are simultaneously actualized in the undivided mind to pop out as related in a particular way. Now it's not the relation, it's not the numerical ordering, but it's the potentiality *for* [CDA assents] some ordering to go on. [CDA assents] I mean it's-- because like it's the potentiality for the combined dependent origination, the particular ordering that actually appears, the-- the thought-making process is not-- not due to matter, it's really the I-- the power of the Ideas or the power of the Mind.

JA: Well, see that's what [AS: Yeah.] was referred to Friday night as the vast potentiality of the power, the indeterminate power of these determinate functions but it was the-- it was their power, their [AS assents] potentiality [AS simultaneously: Yeah I know.] that was the-- [AS simultaneously: I-- I don't understand that.] the power that was the root of matter as the-- as-- [AS simultaneously: Yeah.] as we spoke of it. Now--

AS (simultaneously): No, that's different from Platonism.

JA: Yeah. It's very different.

AS (simultaneously): If that's what they say that's quite different.

JA: Yeah.

AS: And that's-- that's--

JA (simultaneously): And we said without that there-- there could be no appearance, you know.

AS (simultaneously): See, matter is not [JA simultaneously: In fact--] the manifesting power of the [JA simultaneously: Right, right.] Ideas in Platonism. Now, if it [JA simultaneously: But I think--] is for them--

JA: But how is it the root of matter? How is this potentiality that belongs to these three determinate functions, how is that the root of matter?

AS: I don't-- I wouldn't say that it is.

JA: Well that's what he said it was and I was trying to understand--

AS (simultaneously): Who?

JA: Anthony.

AS: Oh. Well in that case it is and I will (laughter) extend [one/two words inaudible] (AS laughing)

JA: I knew I'd get your vasana. [one/two words inaudible]

RW (simultaneously): What is it Plato's saying? I don't know [AS simultaneously: What?] what Plato is saying you're saying.

AS (simultaneously): Well Plato or Plotinus, I'm just saying-- the same-- the same idea, that matter itself has no power to project. The projecting power is in the soul.

RW: Oh, ok.

AS: And this projecting power we as Ti-- this is the thing you quoted from Tim that night, [RW assents] this projecting power or the power of understanding that's putting forth these Ideas has three modes to it, [RW assents] knowing, willing, and feeling. Ok, that's all fine. Now there's one-- is-- there just this-- there's this one factor that they're saying is left out in-- in the appearance and that is a factor that's not on the side of intelligibility at all 'cause from the point of view of intelligibility, you can't really explain how something can *appear* as other. [short pause] Well maybe I'm wrong. Poten-- uh--

TS/S(?): Probably.

CDA: But-- yeah, so--

JA: I mean you're going to say wow-- you can't have something appearing as other without the principle of limitation, right? And then-- and then you have to put a-- you know, a-- bring in another factor. It's not just, you know, potentiality or something like that, there's limitation and then-- well, is that on the side of form, you know, or is it on the side of matter? (I mean/You know) all these things get confused, you know?

AS: Well-- [short pause] Look, um-- [10 second pause] Look, even if we go back to the very most basic imposition of form on what we call just illumined ma-- illumination, space or whatever you want to say, now already to have that we have to have one or two of the Ideas combined in a particular way [JA assents] and not the others. [JA assents] Ok, there has to be some-- sometimes Plato calls like a receptacle, something that's receptive of all-- of *certain* Ideas being combined and not others, ok, that's receptive to certain of them and not all at once or allows certain of the functions to combine in a certain

way. Now the actual combination of Ideas is determined by the World-Ideas and on the s-- is Intelligible. But the receptivity, you know, or potentiality for these to be combined, which is no thing at all, has to be there. That's it. Like you say you got five million combinations. There's a potentiality for any possible combinations. Each of these 360 Ideas has a million different facets to it. Now there's a potentiality for certain of them to be combined in a certain way so that you have an appearance and not the original which is total, you know, which is omnipresent totality. So there has to be some principle of-- on the other si-- that's not on the side of form that is just a pure potentiality for any of these combinations to occur. [JA assents] Ok? The particular sequence of combinations that's actually going to come forth and the power to put them forth and so on is all on the side of the soul or the Ideas. But something has to be-- has to act as the receptacle or potentiality for this. And it's not a thing, I mean it-- Otherwise you would just have the Intelligible. Well--

AP: Well, could you take the example, the dream ex-- [AS: Well--] the sleep example. If you look at the sleep state as more comprehensive than the-- I mean as more comprehensive, that there is a more comprehensive and-- knowledge (than) in the waking state, and then you could say that what-- do-- what we experience in the waking state, the-- what gives the matter to the waking experience is the potential-- the possibility from the point of waking experience to bring out any of the seed-like potential or-- no, not potential because it's more actual but still any of the material present in the sleep state, single them out and give them determination. Would that be--

[12¾ second pause]

AS: I don't know. It might just be the-- the bare factness of this com-- fact of the combined functioning, the different powers of the mind. Just that very fact of their combined functioning. [short pause] Determining appearance.

HS/S(?) (simultaneously): [couple words inaudible] this way, I'll be back.

AD (faint): Well [couple/three words inaudible]

S (faint): Get back [student assents, faint] [few words inaudible]

CDA: Real measure?

AD (simultaneously, faint): Yeah, yeah, yeah, [student assents] yeah. Ok? Put the air conditioner on?

CDA: Ok.

S: Do you want to--

AS: Whatever works.

S: --try to get warm up here?

S: [one/two words inaudible]

S (simultaneously): You have no idea.

S: Well, you want me to go warn her so she's got--

RW (simultaneously): Yeah. That'd be great.

CDA: Ok. Close the windows guys.

AP (simultaneously): Is it over?

S (faint): [one/two words inaudible]

AS: Well, I have a feeling haven't even started.

S: No.

S: Would you start with the quote from Plotinus?

RW: I feel like that the whole gap missing is because of this Friday night class. What happened Friday night? (RW laughing) You want me to just (refrain/referring) to the [one/two words inaudible]

AP: It was (so/soul) so much in that class. Jeff has the tapes for it if you want to listen.

RW: Does-- did Anthony-- he said a lot on Friday night?

AP: He talked a lot.

JA (simultaneously): Well, I'll tell you my impression of it. (JA laughs) This is my subjective impression. We-- Dickie had the outline, you know, had some sort of system at times, this Murti article on knowing, willing, and feeling. And, you know, he did a good job of sort of elaborating it and-- And then Anthony came and just kind of kept shifting the perspective just slightly so that the system couldn't-- couldn't stand up, you know. And it was like very subtle and, you know, like he was just a master at it, you know [one word inaudible] really? You know, he'd make a statement, he would realize you'd have to shift perspective, you know, like to see knowing, willing and feeling that way, you know, or to see potentiality that way, you know, and that it was just like-- it just kind of kicked-- for me, it just kind of kept me off balance all night, you know?

RW (simultaneously): Uh-hm.

JA: That what-- what did you think, Avery? And it was like he threw out little hints that weren't developed, you know, but you realized you just couldn't lock in to this knowing, willing, and feeling as-- as Murti was explaining them, you know. That you could just, you know, turn it up a little and that [RW: Uh-hm.] it was different. You had to say different things and you *couldn't* call appearance illusion. [short pause] I don't know, I-- I was just sort of-- It wa--

[short pause]

RW: You know, I was thinking about the class last night, Avery, when you were talking about providence and necessity and how the point kept being brought out by different people, wasn't necessity within providence. Is there some way that matter is within this Intelligible? I guess I'm just a little bit lost as how matter could be something-- I'm just confused with all that's been presented here this morning. [short pause] What does matter have to do with necessity, with what's happening right here, is-- is it-- All the forms that are occurring here, isn't that the-- the necessity part of the providence and necessity?

[13¾ second pause]

AS: Well--

[short pause]

RW: I'm just having trouble trying to get at what (you're/your)-- the debatable points are here this morning, I'm just-- I feel like I'm hanging on by my fingernails because I don't know what people are talking about.

[student makes noise, CDA laughs]

CDA: May I dispel this cloud. (CDA laughs)

S: Seems to be a--

JA: Well here-- here's an example of something Anthony said here, right, that was like very hard for me. He said in-- in one place he said, "In that the functions of knowing willing and feeling had this vast potentiality, that is the sheer power, indeterminateness that is the root of matter, these functions are unlimited, indeterminate, the source of all combinations and appearance." And, you know, like everything got thrown in to these three functions. So they sounded like matter, number and the three functions all at once and then he went on. "Knowing, willing, and feeling are determinate functions but their product is indeterminative. The trans-Saturnians are aspecting planets or a planet, there is a situation of indeterminacy in which something totally new appears, a new vision, a new creation. An Idea is brought into being, creation out of nothing in your consciousness. There is the unbelievable arisal of something in your consciousness, a new appearance," you know. I think he was trying to-- you know, like there's an illusion, you know, appearance is an illusion. You know, so it was just sort of like he was (JA laughing) throwing out these-- these, you know, sort of fresh ways of looking at the old kind of standard Vedantic notions of illusion, you know, [RW assents] and-- and matter and, you know, it was like very-- And I just wrote the words down and I didn't have it in context [RW assents] and, you know, I wasn't giving it the proper weight and everything but I was just--

CDA: So you want to read that again slowly?

JA: Which part, the last part? I know I (don't--)

RW (simultaneously): That whole thing was just--

CDA (simultaneously): The whole thing, [JA/S(?), faint: Really?] yeah.

RW: That thing you just read. I-- I'd like you to read slowly too. (RW laughs a bit)

JA: Well first of all he started out, "What is undetermined? And that is, knowing, willing, and feeling."

RW: What is undetermined? That is knowing, willing, and feeling.

JA: Yeah. [RW simultaneously: (Uh-hm.)] "Why is arisal of an appearance a confusion of the functioning?" And you have to understand, there was a whole lot of stuff in between there that-- that I didn't get down [CDA simultaneously: Right, right.] but these [RW assents] were just some things. [student assents] "In that these functions have this vast potentiality, that is, a sheer power and

indeterminateness that is the root of matter, these functions are unlimited, indeterminate, the source of all combinations (in/and) appearance. Knowing, willing, and feeling are determinate functions but their product is indeterminate. If the trans-Saturnians are aspecting planets or a planet there is a situation of indeterminacy in which, you know, confusion and sort of a confusion of functions here. Uranus and Pluto were both aspecting a planet, you have knowing, willing.”

[Audio File 1984 0716a Ends]