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Juan Ramón Jiménez, Martin Heidegger, and Maharishi Vedic Science: The Experience of Being

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Abstract

In his poetry, Juan Ramón Jiménez speaks of the universal and absolute field of being in terms of bliss, transcendence, and infinity. His reference to these qualities is based on transcendental experiences he had at several times during his life. A detailed analysis of one of Jiménez’s poems permits an explanation of these and other aspects of Being and brings out the importance of the element of direct experience. Martin Heidegger, on the other hand, approaches the question of Being, in his later philosophic doctrine, through extended commentaries on pre-Socratic philosophers such as Anaximander, and poets like Friedrich Hölderlin. Heidegger was especially fascinated with the ancient Greek word for Being and attempted in his analyses of certain pre-Socratic fragments to recapture by means of his own thinking the Being which he felt he had discovered in them. Heidegger also held that, in poetry such as Hölderlin’s, it was possible for Being, which had been lost, to re-enter into the sphere of human life. Heidegger’s commentaries are especially useful in analyzing Jiménez’s poetry, for the latter embodies many of the principles Heidegger felt he had found in the pre-Socratics and Hölderlin. Maharishi Vedic Science, the science of consciousness, is the science of Being. It provides invaluable explanations of Being in relation to the themes of transcendence, bliss, and language, and is, therefore, extremely relevant to a discussion of Heidegger and Jiménez. Making available a thorough-going intellectual grasp of Being and a practical means to experience it, Maharishi Vedic Science addresses Jiménez’s question of the personal experience of Being as well as the loss and recovery of Being throughout history. Most importantly, Maharishi Vedic Science provides a systematic method for contacting Being and incorporating it into daily life bringing fulfillment to human existence and changing the direction of time from one of suffering to bliss.

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The Upanishads show Being as the ultimate reality which is imperishable and eternal. The hymns of the Vedas and the Bhagavad-Gita sing of the glory of the imperishable Self, Being, ultimate Reality, the Brahman which is the supreme, ultimate Absolute. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1969, p. 35)

Introduction

Being is synonymous with existence. More than that it is the source of the entire phenomenal universe from which all objective materiality and all subjective thought springs. More even than this it is that infinite field of energy, intelligence, and bliss which has the power to transform anything into its own unbounded, unlimited Self. Because of these august qualities, it has remained the single most important subject for poets and philosophers throughout time.

One such person fascinated by Being, not as an abstract philosophical concept but as an intensely personal experience, was the Spanish poet Juan Ramón Jiménez (1881–1958). We find evidence of his deep interest in it throughout the body of his work, which often takes as its subject his own encounters with the transcendental reality of Being. Juan Ramón was a poet who lived and sang Being rather than one who contemplated it intellectually. In his poetry, we are often confronted with intriguing expressions of Being, discontinuous with everyday reality, and beyond the rigors of analysis.

The German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) was also profoundly captivated by the concept of Being, especially its loss in the modern world. Sharing with Juan Ramón an interest in poetry, Heidegger over time came to think of his own process of philosophical inquiry as a kind of poetic thinking. This unusual poetic bent in a philosopher thus makes him an excellent touchstone for examining the philosophical character of Juan Ramón’s poetry. Heidegger turned to poetry in his later works as the most essential expression of Being, and even began to refer to his own philosophizing about Being as “poeticizing thought” (Steiner, 1987, p. 39), which he felt he had also found in the remnants of the pre-Socratic fragments. “Thinking of Being is the original way of poetizing” (Heidegger, 1984, p. 19), he said. Thus, for Heidegger, poetry was
the most profound way to investigate Being, and Juan Ramón’s poetry would seem the kind of poetry Heidegger had in mind. Moreover, Heidegger’s interpretations of the German poet Friedrich Hölderlin (1770–1843) and the pre-Socratics1 are often applicable to Juan Ramón, of whose poetry Heidegger might have said, as he did of Hölderlin’s, “the hidden, occluded truth of being literally re-enters into the house of man” (Steiner, 1987, p. 142).

Stemming from radically different backgrounds, Juan Ramón from the lyrical poetic tradition of the Latin-Mediterranean South, and Heidegger from the rigorous philosophical tradition of the Germanic North, both express in their work an intense interest in the direct knowledge of Being.2 No European poet offers a more profound vision of the experience of being3 than Juan Ramón. No philosopher of the West goes more deeply into the questioning of Being than Heidegger. But to bring these two great thinkers into the fullest harmony about Being a wider scope is needed, an overview of Being, profound yet lucid, and easily understandable. Maharishi Vedic ScienceSM—Maharishi’s science of Being—which goes deeply into both the nature of Being and its invaluable applications, offers such an overview. Hence, it helps us to clarify the theme of Being and to evaluate the purported experiences of Being in both Heidegger and Juan Ramón.4

What we will find in the following pages, then, is that Being is more than an intellectual idea; it is a state of existence that can and must be experienced for life to grow. From the perspective of literature, the relationship between language and Being is particularly compelling. Heidegger locates Being first in language then in thinking, but for Heidegger Being must be experienced prior to language and the thinking process. Juan Ramón and Heidegger explore the nature of Being as the sameness that underlies opposites, and as a knowledge that is always in a state of Being lost (because it is transcendental) and Being recovered (because it is the essence of existence). We will see how Heidegger’s thought illuminates Juan Ramón, we will examine Ramón’s beautiful poem “Criatura afortunada” [“Fortunate creature”], and two essays by Heidegger, one on the early pre-Socratic philosopher Anaximander (610–547 B.C.), and another on Hölderlin.

The word Being, often used to denote the experiences and ideas of Heidegger, Holderlin, and Juan Ramon, may seem in many respects to suggest the same ideas and experience discussed by Maharishi in his Vedic Science. And it is interesting to see parallels that suggest that knowledge of the deepest level of life is not restricted to the Vedic Tradition that Maharishi is reviving. However, in the interest of proper scholarship, we refrain claiming that the way Maharishi uses the term Being and the way Heidegger, for instance, uses it are exactly the same. Maharishi’s use of the term Being is founded on 1) an extensively elaborated body of knowledge—the Veda and Vedic Literature, and 2) has been verified by millions of practitioners of the Transcendental Meditation® program for more than 40 years. Heidegger, Holderlin, and Juan Ramón are historical figures who cannot be currently queried as to their exact experience. With limited references to these experiences in their writing, we can only note the apparent parallels.
The Science of Being

Maharishi (1994) calls Vedic Science the “Science of Consciousness” (pp. 156–157), and Being is another name for (pure) consciousness encountered by the mind when it is “left awake in full awareness of itself without the experience of any object” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1966). Thus, Maharishi Vedic Science, the “Science of Consciousness,” is also the science of Being. In his commentary on the Bhagavad-Gita (1969), Maharishi explains how the individual mind “retires” from the outer field of localized or finite activity to enjoy the experience of unbounded Being: “The process of retiring begins with the expansion of individuality, and when this happens the intellect, losing its individuality, begins to gain universality, begins to gain the unbounded status of Being” (p. 423). The permanent realization of Being is the ultimate reality for the individual and the goal of Maharishi Vedic Science:

The omnipresence of eternal Being, unmanifested and absolute; Its status as That, even in the manifested diversity of creation; and the possibility of the realization of Being by any man in terms of himself—these are the great truths of the perennial philosophy of the Vedas. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1969, p. 9)

According to Maharishi Vedic Science, then, knowing Being is the ultimate good and the primary goal of human life.

To gain the experience of Being, Maharishi Vedic Science provides a systematic procedure, the Transcendental Meditation technique, to expand awareness beyond all limits and to integrate the unbounded consciousness of Being into the boundaries of the every-day world: “Through the regular practice of [the] Transcendental Meditation [technique] the nature of Being becomes steadfast in the nature of the mind to such an extent that it can never be overshadowed by any experience” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1966, p. 239). Maharishi Vedic Science holds that the regular practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique allows the mind to experience not only the three common states of consciousness—waking, dreaming, and sleeping—but also a fourth state of consciousness called Transcendental Consciousness, which is pure Being:

As the omnipresent, essential constituent of creation, Being lies at the basis of everything, beyond all relative existence, beyond all forms and phenomena. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1963, p. 26)

Being is the most glorified, most precious, and most laudable basis of all living. Being is the basis of cosmic law, the basis of all the laws of nature, which lies at the root of all creation and evolution. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1963, p. 28)

Maharishi Vedic Science offers through the Transcendental Meditation program both a theoretical understanding of Being and a practical means for knowing it. Regular practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique unfolds the unlimited potential of human existence by developing higher states of consciousness beginning with Cosmic Consciousness, “in which absolute Being is lived together with all the values of relative life” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1966, p. 62). Maharishi explains that “normal life” begins with the development of these higher states of consciousness.
Maharishi describes how with the repeated experience of Transcendental Consciousness (Turiya), individual awareness progressively evolves into three higher states of consciousness: (a) cosmic consciousness (Turiyatita), (b) refined cosmic consciousness or God consciousness (Bhagavat Chetna), and ultimately, (c) unity consciousness (Brahmi Chetna). . . . Each of these higher states is characterized by the blissful experience of Transcendental Consciousness being maintained along with, at the first stage, individual thoughts and inner experience; at the second stage, along with a greatly enhanced perception of objects; and in the third, along with perception and experience of the unity of all the natural world. . . . (Orme-Johnson, 1987, p. 331)

Heidegger and the Pre-Socratics

Heidegger’s interest in early Greek thinking, especially the pre-Socratics, has its origin in the Far East because of India’s influence on early Greek philosophy. In this light, M. L. West’s (1971) comments in Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient in the writings of Anaximander and other pre-Socratics are particularly noteworthy: “We shall see that Anaximander, like Pherecydes, was himself deeply influenced by the conceptions prevailing in his time among the peoples of the east” (pp. 77–78). One of Anaximander’s basic doctrines influenced by Eastern thought, according to West, is his assertion that the material universe of limited forms and phenomena arises out of a non-material, unbounded source: “In Indian Philosophy too, at least as early as Anaximander, we meet the idea that worlds come out of the infinite and perish back into it” (pp. 93–94). Maharishi Vedic Science states that the source of the phenomenal universe is infinite, unbounded, and non-material. However, an important tenet of Maharishi Vedic Science not expressed in the philosophy of Anaximander, at least insofar as we have glimpses of it in the extant fragments, is that the infinite field of pure consciousness is a state that can be experienced by the individual.

According to Maharishi Vedic Science, the infinite field of life (Being), by its very nature as consciousness is an eternal state of self-referral, that is, it has the capacity to be aware of itself. Aware of itself, it creates within itself the three-in-one structure of knowledge: knower, process of knowing, and object of knowing, called Âishi, Devatå, and Chhandas in Maharishi Vedic Science. Concomitantly, while these three intellectually differentiated values interact, wholeness (Saµhitå) or unmanifest pure consciousness, exists unbroken, and out of this wholeness through the interplay of Âishi, Devatå, and Chhandas the entire manifest universe arises. It is for this reason that Maharishi (1994) states that his Vedic ScienceSM “is the science of the three-in-one structure of the most basic element in nature [Being]—the prime mover of life, the field of consciousness or intelligence”SM (p. 157).

Although Anaximander does not specifically refer to consciousness, his description of the infinite and unbounded source which gives rise to all creation parallels Maharishi’s designation of consciousness as the “prime mover.” West comments on the ancient Greek word Anaximander uses for the source of everything:9

[it] is not a material, or a denial of other materials, it is a denial of limits. In a cosmological context, it is a denial of the kind of limits that other people had talked about in cosmological contexts: the ἀπὸ τῶν ἡλικίων [limits] of earth, sea, sky, and Tartarus, which were intimately linked with their ‘sources.’ Anaximander says that they have their sources in a boundless Beyond, inexhaustible and imperishable. (p. 79)
Thus, Anaximander’s unbounded, non-material source seems to parallel the pure consciousness (Being) posited by Maharishi Vedic Science; an issue also taken up in the philosophy of Martin Heidegger.

The Ancient Greek Word for Being

Heidegger (1984) uses the term Being to refer to the infinite experienced within the boundaries of individual human life. In his later philosophy, he particularly concerns himself with Being employed in the language of the pre-Socratic philosophers. His analysis of their works questions how the experience of Being has been expressed by a number of ancient Greek words which he asserts can no longer properly be understood. The goal of his “poeticizing of the truth of Being” (p. 57) is that the primordial experience of Being is what gave rise to these now mysterious words in the first place. Only by virtue of this experience, according to Heidegger, will we be able to grasp the meaning of the pre-Socratic words: “For before interpreting the fragment . . . it is essential that we translate ourselves to the source of what comes to language in it” (p. 28).

Seemingly at odds with Heidegger, Maharishi Vedic Science (1969) declares words and speech are ultimately incapable of expressing the full reality:

[Brahman] is beyond speech and thought, yet the whole range of thought and speech lie within It. “Within It” and “Without It” are just expressions, and like any other expressions about Brahman they do justice neither to Brahman nor to the speaker nor to the listener. Brahman is lived by man with ease but cannot be spoken of, in the sense that words are inadequate to encompass That which is the unlimited fullness of transcendent Being and the fullness of active life at the same time. (p. 441)

Brahman, the ultimate knowledge of infinite pure consciousness, according to Maharishi (1994), transcends all limited experiences, “is really beyond words due to the limitations of language” (p. 159). Nonetheless, although Brahman lies beyond the field of language, it paradoxically also lies within language’s domain: “Brahman is that which cannot be expressed in words, even though the Upanishads use words to educate us about Its nature” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1969, p. 440).

In essence, Maharishi’s explanation of the relationship between language and Brahman illuminates Heidegger’s view of language, for Heidegger places great emphasis on the experience of Being which “comes to language” in certain words, suggesting, that although Being lies beyond the confines of language, language may nonetheless signal the experience of Being. When Heidegger (1984) declares “we must . . . seek the opportunity which will let us cross over to that source first of all outside the fragment itself” (p. 28), he indicates that Being transcends the text which signals it.

Thinking and the Experience of Being

Heidegger, according to George Steiner (1987), believed that fundamental clues about the inception of what he called “the history of Being” in the Western world were to be found in the language of certain pre-Socratic fragments:
Anaximander, Heraclitus, and Parmenides, who came before [Socrates and Plato], did not need to be “philosophers.” They were “thinkers” (Denker), men caught in the radical astonishment (Thaumazein) of being. They belonged to a primal, therefore “more authentic” dimension or experience of thinking, in which beingness was immediately present to language, to the logos. Just what it signifies to experience and to speak Being in this primary and “thoughtful” way is something that Heidegger labors to explain, to illustrate, and, above all, to “act out” in his late writings. (pp. 27–28)

In a number of later essays, Heidegger sought to experience the thinking of Being as it was originally described by the pre-Socratic philosophers Anaximander, Heraclitus, and Parmenides. In his commentaries, Heidegger makes it clear that the thinking of Being means the experiencing of Being, an interpretation of the Greeks that parallels Maharishi Vedic Science which emphasizes the experience of Being (pure consciousness) leading to the higher states of consciousness discussed earlier. However, an important distinction exists between these two views. Maharishi Vedic Science (1966), unlike Heidegger, contends that thinking must first be transcended in order to experience the deepest field of life:

The glory of Being can be experienced directly and recognized as ultimate reality. By experiencing the subtle states of a sound or a thought, the mind can be led systematically to the subtlest limit of experience and then, transcending this subtlest experience of relative order, can reach the field of the Ultimate. (p. 35)

Thinking, according to Maharishi Vedic Science, engages the mind and keeps it on the contemplative level disallowing transcendence. Heidegger on the other hand holds that a certain kind of thinking, “poetic thinking,” can lead to the experience of Being. J.L. Mehta states that the importance of the “experience” of Being takes place for Heidegger (1984) within language:

Heidegger speaks of the experience of thinking, of thinking as itself an experience, appropriating within thinking the precious element of immediacy in all mysticism. Little attention has been paid to this extraordinary role of ‘experience’ in Heidegger’s writings. He speaks of the experiencing of Being, of the hiddenmost history of Being, of the basic experience of nothingness, of “undergoing an experience with language.” (pp. 35–36)

Commenting on the Anaximander fragment, Heidegger asserts that what is needed is not so much to translate the fragment into modern language, but rather to “translate ourselves” to that experience out of which the fragment has emerged. This need to directly experience Being thus again parallels a fundamental principle of Maharishi Vedic Science, even if the methods for direct experience between the two differ dramatically.

Expressing ourselves in a Heideggerian fashion, it would be possible to say that without having had this experience of Being, or, at the very least, without having had a clear understanding that such an experience is possible, we could not fully understand the meaning of the pre-Socratic word for Being. Thus, Heidegger says that through “poetic thinking” we can have an experience of unbounded Being, but paradoxically, he also suggests that without first having had the experience of Being, we cannot hope to fathom the meaning of the pre-Socratic ontological vocabulary, the consideration of which would provide the necessary “poetic thinking.” Maharishi Vedic Science, providing both the intellectual understanding
and the direct experience of pure consciousness, offers a satisfying solution to the problematic Heideggerian “Being-question” (Seinsfrage) (Steiner 1987, p. 33) or “riddle of Being” (Heidegger, 1984, p. 58).

Juan Ramón and the Experience of Being

Like the Greek words commented on by Heidegger, much of the poetry of Juan Ramón Jiménez may be said to have its source in an experience of Being. We have only to think of works like *Diario de un poeta recién casado* [Diary of a Poet Recently Married] or *Animal de fondo* [Animal of the Deep] to remember that the culminating moments of Juan Ramón’s poetic work are characterized by personal, transcendental experiences which the poet expresses by means of words such as *eternidad* [eternity] and *infinito* [infinite, infinity]. Juan Ramón (1961) expressed his desire to live eternity within the moment of time: “Yo soy un ansioso de la eternidad y la concibo como presente, es decir, como instante” (p. 178) [“I am one who longs for eternity and I conceive of it as something which is present, that is to say, as a moment of time”]. Poetry at its best, for Juan Ramón, was an expression of that eternal unboundedness of Being: “Lo importante en poesía, para mí, es la calidad de eternidad que pueda un poema dejar en el que lo lee . . .” (p. 178) [The important thing in poetry, for me, is the quality of eternity that a poem leaves with the person who reads it . . .].

Juan Ramón speaks about fleeting personal experiences of Being, experiences strongly suggested in the poem “Criatura afortunada” [“Fortunate creature”] which praises a creature who lives a state of pure essence transcending all limitations. The eulogistic mood of the poem reveals to us that the poet feels a profound admiration for as well as an intimate kinship with this transcendent Being. In the first two lines, we learn that the *criatura afortunada* is at home in the water as well as in the air, indicating that it exists beyond the boundaries separating these elements. The theme of transcendence is thus present from the poem’s inception:

**Fortunate Creature**

Singing you go, laughing through the water, / through the air whistling you go, laughing, / in a blue and gold circle, silver and green, / happy to pass by and again to pass by / among the first red sproutings of April, / a different form, of instantaneous / samenesses of light, life, color, / with us, shores aflame!

How joyous you are, Being, / with such a universal and eternal joy! / Happy you break the waves of the air, / you sail against the water’s streaming! / Do you have neither to eat nor to sleep? / Is all of springtime your domain? / Does all that is green, all that is blue, / all that is flowering belong to you? / There is no fear in your glory; / your destiny is to return, return, return, / in a silver and green circle, blue and gold, / for an eternity of eternities!

You give us your hand, in a moment / of possible affinity, of sudden love, / of radiant concession; / and, at your warm contact, / in a wild vibration of body and soul, / we ignite in harmony, / made new, we forget that which is the same, / we glow, for an instant, joyful and golden. / It seems that we too are going to be / neverending like you, / that we are going to fly from the ocean to the forest, / that we are going to leap from the sky to the sea, / that we are going to return, return, return / for an eternity of eternities! / And we sing, we laugh through the air, / through the water we laugh and we whistle!
But you do not have to forget yourself, / You are a perpetual and fortuitous presence, / you are the fortunate Being, / the magic Being alone, the unshadowed Being, / the adored because of warmth and grace, / the free, the intoxicating thief, who, / in a blue and gold circle, silver and green, / goes laughing, whistling through the air, / through the water singing you go, laughing!

In addition to its transcendental nature, the creature of the poem is described as happy, dichośo, a word which echoes the afortunada of the poem’s title. And the word dichośo parallels an important principle of Maharishi Vedic Science (1966) that transcendental Being is synonymous with bliss: “The Upanishads [Vedic texts] explain Being in terms of Ananda, or bliss, and locate It at the source of creation in the transcendental region of life, permeating everything” (p. 35–36).

The Metaphor of Poetry as Bliss

Heidegger also associates the quality of happiness or joy with the experience of Being. In his commentary on the poem “Homecoming” by Hölderlin, Heidegger (1949) describes the primordial source sung by the poet as “the Joyous,” that which “has been made into poetry” (p. 246). He also declares that the source from which the poem speaks is “the Most Joyous.” But, how are we to understand this joyousness? Only if we have some suspicion of what an experience of “the Most Joyous” is can we understand the meaning of the words.

As indicated above, Maharishi Vedic Science (1969) is much more explicit in its description of Being or pure consciousness as “a state of absolute bliss” (p. 118), the most concentrated form of happiness or joy:

When the mind moves towards bliss, it experiences increasing charm at every step; as when one proceeds towards the light, the intensity increases continuously. When the mind experiences increasing happiness, then it does not wander; it remains focused in one direction, unwavering and resolute. Such is the state of the mind moving in the direction of bliss, and when it [the mind] arrives at the direct experience of bliss, it loses all contact with the outside and is contented in the state of transcendental bliss-consciousness. (p. 121)

Maharishi is describing here the development of higher states of consciousness through the Transcendental Meditation technique based on the attraction of the mind toward ever greater degrees of happiness. The subject matter of Juan Ramón’s “Criatura afortunada” and Hölderlin’s “Homecoming,” as well as Heidegger’s commentary on Hölderlin, acquire greater dimension when we look at them from the expanded framework of growth toward bliss-consciousness. Maharishi (1969) has also spoken of growth of consciousness in terms of the blissful experience of returning home:

Having come back home, the traveler finds peace. The intensity of happiness is beyond the superlative. The bliss of this state eliminates the possibility of any sorrow, great or small. Into the bright light of the sun no darkness can penetrate; no sorrow can enter bliss-consciousness, nor can bliss-consciousness know any gain greater than itself. This state of self-sufficiency leaves one steadfast in oneself, fulfilled in eternal contentment. (p. 424)

It is from this understanding of coming home to joy that Heidegger’s commentary on Hölderlin’s poem is most meaningful. Without such an understanding, the significance of both poem and commentary are greatly reduced.
Poetry originally chanted or sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument such as a lyre (the origin of the word *lyric*) formed a popular entertainment for the purpose of producing joy. Although in this century poetry has become more and more silent, it still maintains its connection to song, and by analogy the singer is a poet and the poet a singer. Because of this correspondence between these two art forms, the opening image of Juan Ramón’s poem, “cantando vas” [you go singing], suggests a kinship between the poet and the transcendent creature he praises. In “Homecoming,” Hölderlin also refers to the poet as a singer, and Heidegger (1949) comments that the value of singing is the value of poetry, to bring “the Most Joyous” to language (p. 266).

Heidegger’s (1984) conception of the relationship between language, Being, and joy acquires significance when we recall that philosophical *thinking* became for him a form of poetry: “thinking is the poetizing of the truth of Being in the historic dialogue between thinkers” (p. 57). Maharishi Vedic Science fulfills Heidegger’s idea of “the Most Joyous” in language by allowing transcendental bliss-consciousness experienced during the Transcendental Meditation technique to flow from the field of the unbounded to the field of boundaries, the field of language. Speaking of this flow of consciousness in relationship to poetry and the poet, Maharishi states (1972), “when pure consciousness is lively, one’s whole life becomes musical, poetical.” When pure consciousness flows, when it is “lively,” anything may become a pretext for poetic utterance: “Every perception of a phenomenon is an impulse of poetry; every step of one’s own living is a step of poetry.” The entire creation, when fully perceived, then, is the flow of consciousness, the song (poetry) of cosmic intelligence. The poet and audience, therefore, listen to life’s cosmic song only to the degree their awareness has been expanded through the experience of Being:

The whole emphasis of this spontaneously flowing creation as the song of the Creator is to inspire in every life that ability to flow. Any poetry, doesn’t matter what, in any age doesn’t matter in what language, it is the flow of life; it inspires. In every little bit of creation, in every phenomenon of creation, in every impulse of creation, is that song lively. It’s a matter of who can pick up what. (1972)

Maharishi Vedic Science (1972) takes poetry and song beyond their ordinary realm into a cosmic context, connecting “the song of individual life with the song of the Creator so that the individual may pulsate in the dignity of the Creator,” a connection made possible through the regular practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique. The metaphor of poetry as bliss producing song, therefore, found in Hölderlin, Heidegger, and Juan Ramón, takes on broader significance within an expanded reference. Maharishi Vedic Science presents a complete picture of how the individual singer is connected to the cosmic singer (Creator). More importantly, it provides the means to realize that connection.

“Crossing Over”

Heidegger, on the Anaximander fragment, emphasizes that the philosopher as well as the poet must have “crossed over into” the source in order for Being to “come to language.” In order to understand this source or Being as it is brought to language in the
Anaximander fragment, Heidegger (1984) chooses an example from Homer’s *Iliad* which, he says, offers “the chance to cross over to what the Greeks designate with the word ὄντα (Being),” provided we let ourselves be transported by the poet to the distant shore of the matter spoken there” (p. 32). Heidegger is suggesting that through reading or listening to poetry, such as the *Iliad*, we may experience Being. Poetry thus becomes for Heidegger a vehicle to carry the listener to the experience of Being. Maharishi (1974) says that the study of literature, like the experience of the subllest level of existence, is a means for refining consciousness. He states that “It cultures emotions, cultures speech, cultures intellect, cultures the whole personality. This is the value of literature, precisely what happens with greater speed in Transcendental Meditation.” It would seem that the refinement derived from contacting Being as discussed by Heidegger has found its way into Juan Ramón’s poem. The “fortunate creature” would seem to have “crossed over” into the source, “the Most Joyous.” Having experienced Being, the creature of Juan Ramón’s poem is happy (*dichoso, afortunada*). The poem also suggests that the poet himself has experienced Being and, as Heidegger would say, has then “brought [It] to language,” indicated by the poet’s sympathy with the transcendent creature he eulogizes. Inherent in this interpretation is the suggestion that we readers of the poem, like the hypothetical reader of Homer’s *Iliad* to whom Heidegger alludes, may also have the same experience by means of an appropriate reading of the poem. Thus, it can be argued that for the truly visionary the final goal of poetry is to give both the poet and the reader a glimpse of Being. Conversely, the degree to which we are familiar with Being is the degree to which we can appreciate the fullest meaning of a poem’s words.

**Sameness and Difference: The Opposing Values of Being**

One of the themes which characterizes Juan Ramón’s “Criatura afortunada” is the paradox of sameness found in the presence of differences: “Happy to pass by and again to pass by / among the first red sproutings of April, / a different form, of instantaneous / samenesses of light, life, color.” The creature of the title is said to pass by again and again, and this passing by causes happiness (*dichoso de pasar y repasar*). Passing by again and again, the creature takes on over time a different form (*forma distinta*), but paradoxically remains equal to itself, the same. Thus, it is simultaneously both the same and different. In his commentary on the Anaximander fragment, Heidegger (1984) suggests that the source which comes to language in the pre-Socratic fragments manifests in different ways, but is also nevertheless one and the same: “all these name the Same. In the concealed richness of the Same the unity of the unifying One . . . is thought by each thinker in his own way” (p. 56). In Heidegger’s vocabulary, *the Same, Being, the source*, and *the Most Joyous* are synonymous, merely pointing out different qualities of that same quality-less state. In terms of Maharishi Vedic Science, the infinite ocean of pure consciousness is eternally the same (non-change), even while becoming the individual waves of creation (change):

> Life is nothing but Being in all Its phases of absolute and relative existence; oneness of Being is the diversity of life, imperishable Being is the ever-changing, perishable universe. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1966, p. 36)
It is possible, therefore, to say that non-change (sameness) allows change (differ-
ence) to joyously take place, as in “Criatura afortunada”—joyous because change
cannot diminish the changeless nature of Being. Maharishi (1972) speaks of the har-
monious coexistence of sameness (silence) and differences (dynamic activity) in those
permanently situated on the finest level of creation: “the state of fulfillment is never a
static state—it is a state where all dynamism rejoices in having its value in something
which is the same.”

In Juan Ramón’s poem, the coexistence of sameness and differences is contained in
the phrase, *instantáneas igualdades de luz, vida, color* [instantaneous samenesses of
light, life, color]. *Instantáneas* means locked or bound within the instant of time, where-
as *igualdades* [samenesses] points to that which transcends the boundaries of difference,
and, hence, the boundaries of time. The words *luz, vida,* and *color* articulate shades of
difference in the spatial/temporal world. The poet thus evokes a multiplicity of chang-
ing forms manifest at diverse moments and places but balanced on a sameness that
never changes. We might conclude, then, that the *criatura afortunada,* forever arriving
and passing away, is joyful precisely because it is not bound by the bounded states to
which it arrives and through which it passes.

The *criatura afortunada* seems to be enjoying, recalling Maharishi’s words (1972),
“a state where all dynamism rejoices in having its value in something which is the
same.” The creature dwells amongst the luxuriant, dynamic springtime forms, *entre el
rojo primer brotar de abril* (among the first red sproutings of April), but without the
shadow of decay inevitably linked to these forms through time. Paradoxically, although
bound, the creature is free, referred to as *el libre* near the poem’s end. Freedom, that is
liberation, according to Maharishi (1969), is the ultimate end, freedom in unbounded
consciousness in which awareness is not overshadowed by the boundaries of individual-
ity. In this state
the seer of Truth perceives clearly the difference between the permanent, never-changing
absolute state of life and its ever-changing states of diversified phenomenal existence. It is
this which gives him that stability and heightened state of consciousness by which he rises
above the binding influence of activity in the phenomenal world. (p. 26)

**Hölderlin and “The Essence of Poetry”**

Heidegger (1949) sees Hölderlin as that poet “borne on by the poetic vocation to
write expressly of the essence of poetry” (p. 271), and the essence of poetry, according
to Heidegger, is the relation between Being and beings. This relationship he calls
*presencing,* and it is, as Heidegger (1984) speaks of it, the process by which the world
(being(s) emerges from its source (Being) (p. 51). Maharishi Vedic Science describes
the same process as the phenomenal world emerging from the field of pure conscious-
ness. Maharishi (1972) describes this transformation of consciousness into matter:
“The most profound, the most successful poetry is the impulse of creation, such per-
fection, such variety, and such a harmonious organization of this complex variety,
creation, because it is the song of the Creator, which is present everywhere.”

This expression of creation as poetry parallels Heidegger’s definition of the essence
of poetry—namely the emergence of the world of beings from the source (Being). The
greatest poets, according to Maharishi (1972), are those who can function at the cosmic level of the Creator’s song, who can through poetry “connect the song of individual life with the song of the Creator so that the individual may pulsate in the dignity of the Creator. This is the beautiful, solemn, sacred purpose of the flow of poetry.” It is this cosmic level of poetry which Heidegger felt he had discovered in Hölderlin and other select poets:

the supreme poet—Pindar, Sophocles, Hölderlin—is pre-eminently the shepherd of Being . . . it is the poet who, supremely, perhaps even alone, is guarantor of man’s ultimate Heimkehr (“homecoming”) to natural truth, to a sanctified hearth in the world of being. . . . It is the poet’s calling . . . to bring creation into the neighborhood of the divine. (Steiner, 1987, p.142)

Had Heidegger known Juan Ramón’s “Criatura afortunada,” he no doubt would have praised it, would have felt that in it Being “comes to language” as it does in the pre-Socratic fragments.

The Loss and Recovery of Being

According to Heidegger, for the full meaning of the pre-Socratic word for Being to really speak to us it is necessary to first experience the reality of what the word symbolizes. The same requirement would apply to the poetry of Hölderlin or Juan Ramón if their evocations of Being are to be understood in the light of the pre-Socratic word. About the importance of this kind of experience Heidegger (1984) says,

Perhaps only when we experience historically what has not been thought—the oblivion of Being—as what is to be thought, and only when we have for the longest time pondered what we have long experienced in terms of the destiny of Being, may the early word speak in our contemporary recollection. (p. 51)

Heidegger is asserting that, historically, what he calls the “destiny of Being” begins with its forgetting (“the oblivion of Being”) and ultimately involves its recollection. Maharishi Vedic Science holds that the eternal knowledge of pure consciousness becomes lost through time, but is also inevitably regained in time. Indeed, the practical techniques of Maharishi Vedic Science are meant to recover the knowledge of pure consciousness. Maharishi (1969) comments on the inevitability of this loss and revival of knowledge:

This is the tragedy of knowledge, the tragic fate that knowledge must meet at the hands of ignorance. It is inevitable, because the teaching comes from one level of consciousness and is received at quite a different level. The knowledge of Unity must in time shatter on the hard rocks of ignorance. History has proved this again and again. (p. 13)

The repeated loss and revival of the knowledge of pure consciousness, which we find explained in Maharishi Vedic Science, is mirrored by the eternal return of Juan Ramón’s “Criatura afortunada.” The line, “tu destino es volver, volver, volver,” [your destiny is to return, return, return] restates the theme of repeated arrivals or passings of Being in the guise of beings, a theme previously alluded to in the line “dichoso de pasar y repasar” [happy to pass by and again to pass by]. What makes the fortunate creature’s return (volver) fortunate is the recurring entry of Being into the field of creation.
Juan Ramón’s use of the word *destino* [destiny] is especially interesting in reference to Heidegger’s allusion to “the destiny of Being”—the historical forgetting and recollection of Being within the world of beings—from his commentary on the Anaximander fragment. Indeed, the “destiny of Being” is for Heidegger the “history of Being.” History localizes events in space and time, within boundaries. The history of Being, then, tells the story of how unbounded Being gets lost and then recovered within boundaries. Juan Ramón’s “*tu destino es volver, volver, volver*” similarly suggests the history of Being, its eternal cycle of going and then returning again and again to the boundaries of the world.

The theme of returning may be understood in an individual as well as a historical context. According to Maharishi Vedic Science, an individual may through the Transcendental Meditation technique repeatedly experience Being by going beyond (transcending) the boundaries of the phenomenal world. Having experienced Being the person returns to ordinary activity more grounded in the Self. This repeated entry into and emergence from the field of Being may be thought of as the going and coming on the path of knowledge. Maharishi speaks of this phenomenon in terms of analysis and synthesis. On the level of individual experience, these terms signify the mind’s inward [synthesis] and outward [analysis] movements during the Transcendental Meditation technique, movements that parallel the pattern of Heidegger’s historical structure of departure and return. The Vedic word for return is *Nivartadhwam*, return in both directions, from point [the bounded world] to infinity [unbounded Being] and from infinity back to the point. This is the path of Veda, the path of gaining the knowledge of Being through direct experience (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1994, p. 42).

The value of this structure of coming and going, according to Maharishi Vedic Science, is to reach a state in which unbounded pure consciousness is permanently maintained within boundaries. In such a state, there would come an end to all the going and coming between boundaries and the unbounded (as in the case of the person who experiences but does not sustain Transcendental Consciousness) because both boundaries and unboundedness would be experienced simultaneously, transcendent Being would be maintained along with the experience of the phenomenal world of waking, dreaming, and sleeping. Maharishi (1966) explains the development of this transformation:

To begin with, Being is very delicately impressed on the nature of the mind. As the practice is continued, It becomes more and more deeply infused into the mind and eventually becomes so deep, significant and unshakeable that It is lived all the time, through all experiences of the waking, dreaming and deep sleep states. Then one is living eternal freedom on the level of relative experience. (p. 63)

This state is a cessation of the process of retiring (transcending), another meaning for *Nivartadhwam* (returning), when retiring is no longer necessary. Maharishi (1972) speaks of retiring through the metaphor of the rising and falling of a wave and as the goal of life and poetry: “The entire purpose of poetry is to fill the life of the poet in the unmoving steadiness of the eternal field of life, where waves may come and go, but he is stationary in the non-coming, non-going, infinite, unbounded value of life.”

This exalted state in which the individual simultaneously experiences absolute pure consciousness and relative activity seems to be exemplified in the life of the *criatura*
afortunada. The creature is fortunate [afortunada] (or happy [dichoso]) precisely because it maintains intact its relationship with Being, even while entering into the world of boundaries, the world of beings. Personified, it is addressed in the familiar tú (tu destino) suggesting that it is not only unmanifest, infinite, and impersonal, but it is also to be found in the world of beings, in the manifest, finite, and personal. The word criatura expresses the limited nature of beings, while afortunada conveys the bliss of living a fortuitous state without limitations.

**Errancy, Forgetting, Maya, and Avidya**

As we have seen, for Heidegger (1984) to speak of the “history of Being” is to speak of the loss of Being in the world of beings. At the beginning of history, he tells us, errancy or wandering results from the concealment of Being: “As it reveals itself in beings, Being withdraws. . . . In this way, by illuminating them, Being sets beings adrift in errancy. Beings come to pass in that errancy by which they circumvent Being and establish the realm of error. . . . Error is the space in which history unfolds” (p. 26).

Related to errancy and appearing in both “Criatura afortunada” and “The Anaximander Fragment” is the theme of forgetting. In Juan Ramón’s poem, we find such allusions to forgetting as nos olvidamos, nuevos, de lo mismo [made new, we forget that which is the same] and tú no te tienes que olvidar [you do not have to forget yourself]. Unlike the criatura afortunada, we—humanity—according to Heidegger’s “history of Being,” do forget who we really are. Through forgetting we become different, made new (nuevos). But, what is it we forget? In order to become different, we forget what is the same (lo mismo), that is Being which never changes, forgotten because it lies outside the field of change, the field of living. Because Being is the primal font from which all life springs, what we are forgetting is who we really are. As a result, Heidegger (1984) tells us, we begin to wander in the realm of history where beings are set “adrift in errancy” (p. 26).

Heidegger’s error and errancy, the way Being gets lost in the world, are concepts similar to Maya (illusion) and Avidya (ignorance) found in Vedic Literature, concepts expanded upon in Maharishi Vedic Science (1969) to explain the relationship between unmanifest Being and manifest creation:

maya means literally that which is not, that which does not exist. This brings to light the character of maya: it is not anything substantial. Its presence is inferred from the effects that it produces. . . . Avidya, or ignorance, is nothing but maya in a coarser form. If maya can be likened to clear water, then muddy water is avidya. (pp. 491–492)

The purpose of Maharishi Vedic Science is to allow the individual to identify fully with the unmanifested, absolute Reality in such a way as not to be overshadowed by the manifest boundaries of relative life. In higher states of consciousness, one appreciates the boundaries of relative life without losing the unboundedness of absolute Being. In such states of consciousness, rather than a delusion and an obstacle to truth, even Maya becomes an experience to be enjoyed: “It is on this level of experience that the awakening of Unity Consciousness, Brahman Consciousness, blossoms. It is on this level of experience that Lord Krishna’s teaching becomes significant: . . . Because I am
unbounded, my Maya is also unbounded” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1994, pp. 321–322). Maharishi Vedic Science (1969) thus offers an antidote to Maya, to the “tragedy of knowledge, the tragic fate that knowledge must meet at the hands of [Avidya] ignorance” (p. 13). It would seem it is also an answer to the Heideggerian tragic “destiny of Being,” to the forgetting of Being, and to the “realm of error” in which this “forgetting” results: Ignorance, suffering, error, and forgetting, and all the problems that plague mankind.

“Fear Is Born of Duality”

In “Criatura afortunada,” the poet addresses this discrepancy between the world of boundaries and the world of unboundedness when he declares “there is no fear in your glory.” This contrast between temor [fear] and Gloria [glory] may be understood as alternately representing the life of boundaries and unbounded Being. The Upanishads state, “Dvitiyād vai bhayaḥ bhavati” [Certainly fear is born of duality], and Maharishi (1994) says “whenever and wherever there is a sense of two, fear or suffering can exist” (Gita, v. 50). Fear, therefore, found in division (limits, boundaries) as opposed to unity (undividedness) which is “pure singularity” devoid of duality (pp. 155, 157). The word singularity recalls Heidegger’s (1984) grammatical analysis of the Greek words for Being and beings: “But ἐόν, ‘Being,’” is not only the singular form of the participle ἐόντα, “beings”; rather, it indicates what is singular as such, what is singular in its numerical unity and what is singularly and unifyingly one before all numbers” (p. 33). Heidegger thus suggests an undivided reality which has come to language, an unbounded, single field of eternal sameness which can be experienced. Therefore, when Juan Ramón’s poet says, “there is no fear in your glory,” he says in effect that unity predominates over division, the unbounded predominates over boundaries.

The Recovery of Being

Heidegger (1984) tells us that from within the erring field of history there exists a possibility of transcending error and, therefore, history. He connects this transcendence to the experience which lies hidden within the ancient Greek lexicon of the Anaximander fragment: “Does a streak of light still pierce the misty confusion of errancy and tell us what ὀντα [Being] and ἐνα [to be] say in Greek? Only in the brilliance of this lightning streak can we translate ourselves to what is said in the fragment” (p. 27). To experience the “lightning streak” is to experience the reality of the Being of beings, to experience the process of becoming (history) without losing the experience of Being. Maharishi Vedic Science suggests that we come to experience the integration of unbounded pure consciousness within boundaries, infinity within a point. This translating of ourselves to the source of what comes to language in the pre-Socratic fragments, is central to Heidegger’s thinking. Nonetheless, it is important to recall that while speaking passionately of the need to experience Being, Heidegger nowhere offers a clear method to such an experience, although he certainly seems to be seeking for one in his explorations of the Anaximander fragment and other pre-Socratic texts. Maharishi
Vedic Science, on the other hand, by providing a systematic path to the experience of pure consciousness, clearly proclaims an answer to the methodological void found in Heidegger’s prolonged reflections on the essentiality of experiencing Being.

In “Criatura afortunada,” contacting Being is expressed as participation in the reality of the fortunate creature (criatura afortunada) whose Being is not overshadowed even in the midst of the ceaseless flow of its own becoming:

You give us your hand, in a moment / of possible affinity, of sudden love, / of radiant concession;

we glow, for an instant, joyful and golden. / It seems that we too are going to be / neverending like you,

that we are going to return, return, return / for an eternity of eternities!

In these lines, Being, personified as the criatura afortunada, recalls a similar personification of Being in Hölderlin’s “Homecoming,”

Silent he dwells alone, and brightly shines his countenance, / The heavenly one seems disposed to give life, / To create joy, with us, as often when, conscious of measure, / Conscious of all that breathes, . . . the god / Sends to cities and houses most genuine happiness . . .

And with slow hand makes joyful those who sorrow (Heidegger, 1949, p. 237)

As in “Criatura afortunada,” Hölderlin’s Being is said to offer its hand in a gesture of communion.²⁶

About the personification which takes place in “Homecoming,” Heidegger, (1949) comments, “Here in the ‘highest’ dwells the ‘high one,’ who is who he is, as having enjoyed ‘the play of holy beams’: the Joyous One. If he is a person, then he seems inclined ‘to create joy, with us’” (p. 251). As in Juan Ramón’s poem, Being personified bestows upon us ordinary mortals the experience of Being. In each poem, personified Being extends a hand so that we might share in the experience of joy (alegres de oro [joyful and golden], makes joyful those who sorrow). Thus, Heidegger’s commentary on the Anaximander fragment, Hölderlin’s “Homecoming,” Heidegger’s commentary on “Homecoming,” and Juan Ramón’s “Criatura afortunada” all contain similar affirmations that finite human beings are capable of experiencing unbounded, infinite Being. These works, unfortunately, can only whet our appetite for Being, they cannot give us a means to actually taste it.

Solving “The Riddle of Being”

The tragic incapability of experiencing Being is underscored in “Criatura afortunada” by the word parece [it seems] in the line, “parece que vamos a ser/perenes como tú” [it seems that we too are going to be / neverending like you]. It is not that humans are truly immortal, they only seem so momentarily. Only momentarily can they break the boundaries of time and mortality, a state of affairs in sharp contrast to the criatura afortunada who is completely unclouded (“el ser insombre” [the unshadowed Being]) by the world’s boundaries. The criatura afortunada dwells within boundaries but is not
bound by them. With this contrast in mind we see with what profundity the last lines of the poem speak of that Being (criatura) who is inseparable from Being,

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{you are a perpetual and fortuitous presence,} \\
&\text{you are the fortunate being,} \\
&\text{the magic being alone, the unshadowed being . . .}
\end{align*}
\]

Again we find the bound and the unbounded juxtaposed. The words presencia [presence] and perpetua [perpetual] speak of the unchanging nature of Being, which is “sheer perdurance” in Heidegger’s words. The word casual, on the other hand, points to the accidental or time/space-bound events of history, Heidegger’s field of errance and error, and in terms of Maharishi Vedic Science, the waking, dreaming, and sleeping states of consciousness separated from their common source. To join presencia, perpetua, and casual together, as the poem does, is to join opposite values in such a way as to fulfill Heidegger’s exhortation to “think Being so essentially that . . . Being sustains and characterizes becoming (\(\gamma\varepsilon\nu\sigma\zeta\xi-\phi\sigma\rho\alpha\)) [becoming (creation, genesis)—becoming (destruction, decay)] in an essential, appropriate manner” (31). The desire to integrate Being and becoming, so eloquently expressed in Heidegger, finds its fulfillment through the Transcendental Meditation program which achieves this integration. Maharishi (1994) thus defines his Vedic Science, of which the Transcendental Meditation technique is the practical application, as “the science of eternal silence [Being] coexisting with eternal dynamism [becoming] at the basis of creation” (p. 158).

Presencia in Juan Ramón’s poem suggests Being; Heidegger’s presence designates Being; and his presencing indicates being’s relationship to the world we inhabit. Heidegger (1984) asserts that the difference between these terms has remained obscured since the time of the pre-Socratics: “The essence of presencing, and with it the distinction between presencing and what is present, remains forgotten. The oblivion of Being is oblivion of the distinction between Being and beings” (p. 50). Thus, Heidegger contends that the difference between the world, which is the domain of beings, and its source, which is Being, remains veiled or forgotten, although in certain early Greek words this dichotomy is sustained:

The distinction between Being and beings, as something forgotten, can invade our experience only if it has already unveiled itself with the presencing of what is present; only if it has left a trace which remains preserved in the language to which Being comes. Thinking along those lines, we may surmise that the distinction has been illuminated more in that early word about Being than in recent ones . . . the relation to what is present in presencing as such may announce itself in such a way that presencing comes to speak as this relation. The early word concerning Being, τὸ χρεον [that which must be; need, necessity, fate], designates such a relation. (p. 51)

An interesting parallel exists between Maharishi Vedic Science and these remarks by Heidegger. In both, the goal is not simply to distinguish between unboundedness and the boundaries of phenomenal existence, but rather to strengthen the connection or relationship between them, eventually to integrate them, while at the same time preserving their separate status.

The fortunate creature of Juan Ramón’s poem exemplifies this goal because it does not forget (lose) the unboundedness of Being—"tú no te tienes que olvidar" [you do not
have to forget]—even though it exists within the world’s boundaries. The poem, however, suggests that the poet unlike the creature is not so blessed, even though a glimpse of that blessedness has been granted him. As a consequence, a tragic shadow falls across the joyfulness of the poem. Heidegger more optimistically suggests the permanence of experience of Being as a viable possibility, the integration of the ever-changing and the never-changing. Moreover, it is his strong belief that the very outcome of Western history depends upon humanity’s gaining this experience.

We might assert in an exaggerated way, which nevertheless bears on the truth, that the fate of the West hangs on the translation of the word ξόν [Being], assuming that the translation consists in crossing over to the truth of what comes to ξόν, language in Being (Heidegger, 1984, p. 33).

For Heidegger, then, a proper translation of the Greek word for Being would involve an experience of what “comes to language” in that word. However, Heidegger, as we have seen, does not say how a translation is to be achieved. This knowledge, according to Maharishi Vedic Science, is contained in Vedic texts such as the Bhagavad-Gita which, if properly understood, can revive both the intellectual knowledge of pure consciousness and the proper means to experience it, as Maharishi (1969) explains in his preface: “The purpose of this commentary is to restore the fundamental truths of the Bhagavad-Gita and thus restore the significance of its teaching. If this teaching is followed, effectiveness in life will be achieved, men will be fulfilled on all levels and the historical need of the age will be fulfilled also” (p. 17). Unlike Heidegger, Maharishi’s commentary (1969) on the Bhagavad-Gita, chapter 2 verse 45, explicitly states how pure consciousness is to be experienced:

Here is a technique [Transcendental Meditation] that enables every man to come to the great treasure-house within himself and so rise above all sorrows and uncertainties in life. From this verse onwards, the entire teaching of the Bhagavad-Gita proclaims the glory of achieving the state of the Transcendent. (p. 131)

In “The Anaximander Fragment,” Heidegger (1984) says that the destiny of the West depends upon the solution to “the riddle of Being” (p. 58), and in his commentary on the pre-Socratics he attempts to solve that riddle through his “poetizing of the truth of Being” (p. 57). By pointing out the value of Being and its function in language, Heidegger has performed for the world an invaluable service, but his attempt to solve the “question of Being” ultimately falls short because it is incapable of offering any systematic method to directly experience it. Practical knowledge of the finest level of existence, according to Maharishi Vedic Science (1966), unfortunately “lies beyond the reach of understanding, beyond mind and intellect. Since It is transcendental, It cannot be comprehended by thought and is beyond contemplation and intellectual discrimination and decision” (p. 274). Heidegger to his credit does find evidence of the experience of Being in the vocabulary of Anaximander and the poetry of Hölderlin, and using applied Heidegger, the present essay also finds similar evidence in the poetry of Juan Ramón Jiménez.

In the final analysis, these diverse literary and philosophical signposts seem to point in unsuspected ways to the same source of existence and the same essential need to integrate this non-changing field into the changing world. Maharishi Vedic Science, sup-
ported by the long tradition of Vedic teaching, the enormous body of knowledge from Vedic Literature, and the immensely effective technologies of the Transcendental Meditation technique and the TM-Sidhi program finally provides a fuller means to understand the deepest field of existence. In its fullness it completes Heidegger’s philosophy of Being and Juan Ramón’s poetic vision of Being; more importantly, it fulfills the desire of living this state that the writings of these two great thinkers so eloquently express.

Notes

1Steiner (1987) gives an objective appraisal of the weaknesses and strengths of Heidegger’s interpretative methods (pp. 141–146).

2Indeed, if we are to judge by certain of their works, as I hope the present paper will demonstrate, Heidegger and Juan Ramón would also seem to have had glimpses, albeit temporary, of Transcendental Consciousness and perhaps even higher states of consciousness as described by Maharishi Vedic Science. It was, we may speculate, because of such experiences that Juan Ramón and Heidegger were especially fond of literature containing remnants of the Vedic Tradition of knowledge of (Heidegger in his fascination with the pre-Socratics, and Juan Ramón in his predilection for Vedic Literature), which Maharishi Vedic Science has clarified and re-enlivened in the present day. It is therefore not surprising that, even though their understanding of Vedic knowledge is incomplete, Heidegger and Juan Ramón do at times express concepts which are much more fully elucidated in Maharishi Vedic Science.

3Although this experience takes place within the boundaries of time and space, it does at the same time remain beyond them. This paradoxical experience of infinity within finite boundaries has been attested to by artists, writers, scientists, and saints throughout history. William Blake, for example, spoke of perceiving the world within a grain of sand, and by so doing, coined a metaphor for the experience of unbounded Being (infinity) within boundaries (finite limits).

4In the Spanish-speaking world, although it is an uncommon practice with most celebrities, the custom is to refer to Juan Ramón Jiménez just by his first names—Juan Ramón. It suggests the all-pervasive influence and the greatness of the poet as well as a certain familiarity Spanish-speaking peoples feel towards him.


7It has even been suggested that Heidegger’s own thought, in its later manifestations, has much in common with the thought of ancient India (Mehta, 1987, pp. 15–45).

8The point that the ultimate Reality (Being, unboundedness) of the universe is Transcendental Consciousness, and that It can be experienced by anyone according to Maharishi Vedic Science, is of utmost importance in our consideration of Heidegger, Juan Ramón, and the pre-Socratics.

9I wish to thank Dr. John Flodstrom of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Louisville for providing me with the English translations of Greek words appearing in brackets throughout this paper.

10The modern science of quantum physics sets forth a strikingly similar theory of the origin of
the cosmos. Physicist John Hagelin has identified the unified field, postulated by quantum physics as the source of the universe, with the field of pure consciousness described in Vedic texts. Thus, the most widely accepted scientific theory of how the material universe emerges from a non-material source, the unified field, would seem to confirm the most ancient tradition of knowledge on earth. John Hagelin (1987), “Is Consciousness the Unified Field? A Field Theorist’s Perspective,” Modern Science and Vedic Science 1: 28–87.

Maharishi (1966) comments on the relationship between Being and Brahman in the following passage: “The idea of Being as the ultimate reality is contained in the oldest records of Indian thought. The eternal texts of the Vedas, crowned with the philosophy of the Upanishads, reveal the relative and the Absolute as two aspects of the one reality, Brahman, absolute Being, which, although unmanifest in Its essential nature, manifests as relative creation. Life is nothing but Being in all Its phases of absolute and relative existence; oneness of Being is the diversity of life, imperishable Being is the ever-changing, perishable universe” (p. 36).

Maharishi Vedic Science (1969) declares “in the field of speech, Brahman lies between two contrary statements” (p. 440); examples of this are the statements that, “Reality is both manifest and unmanifest” (p. 9) and “It [Brahman] is absolute and relative at the same time. It is the eternal imperishable even while It is ever-changing. It is said to be both this and That” (pp. 440–441).

Maharishi (1966) holds that knowledge has two components, intellectual understanding and direct experience. The former without the latter is of little value: “How can ordinary human intelligence, on the level of intellectual understanding, comprehend the greatness of cosmic intelligence to be found in the field of transcendental Being? . . . Experience of Being permits one to live life in its full stature and significance and leads one to live the normal life of man—cosmic consciousness” (p. 64).

Rhoda Orme-Johnson (1987) comments on the importance of knowledge of Transcendental Consciousness for a proper understanding of certain texts: “The state of the reader’s consciousness, how broad or how bounded it might be, is therefore crucial in the interpretation of literature. Readers who have never experienced pure consciousness, had glimpses of higher states of consciousness, or known of their existence would be unable to understand references to these states and might take them to be merely fanciful or primarily metaphysical speculation” (p. 364).

See the “Introducción” by Antonio Sanchez-Barbudo (Jiménez, 1964, pp. 41–44). An example of a poem from Animal de fondo which exemplifies the point I am making is “Al centro rayeante.” Of this poem, Sanchez-Barbudo, in his commentary, says that the poet feels himself to be “poseedor del infinito” [possessor of the infinite] (p. 71). Juan Ramón (1961) also connects the element of consciousness to this kind of experience (see, for example, the poems “Lo mágico esencial nombrado,” and “Conciencia hoy azul,” pp. 72–76).

Translations from Spanish to English here and elsewhere in this paper are the author’s.

It has been amply demonstrated that there are significant parallels between Juan Ramón’s poetry and certain Vedic texts. In Símbolos y dioses en el último Juan Ramón Jiménez, Ceferino Santos-Escudero has documented extensively the Spanish poet’s interest in and debt to the literature of ancient India. Another point of interest in this regard is that Juan Ramón and his wife Zenobia are to this day the principal translators into Spanish of the works of Rabindranath Tagore, the Bengali poet and essayist, who was steeped in the literature and thought of the Vedic Tradition.

In my translation, I have tried to be as faithful as possible to the meaning of the words in
Spanish and to their special use in the context of Juan Ramón’s poem. In terms of Heidegger’s vocabulary, Being is equivalent to the Spanish word ser, while Being is equivalent to criatura, as they are used in Juan Ramón’s poem.

19 Note the use of the word being (not capitalized) as a synonym for creature here and elsewhere throughout this paper.

20 Criatura afortunada.

Cantando vas, riendo por el agua, / por el aire silbando vas, riendo, / en ronda azul y oro, plata y verde, / dichoso de pasar y repasar / entre el rojo primer brotar de abril, / ¡Forma distinta, de instantáneas / igualdades de luz, vida, color, / con nosotros, orillas inflamadas! / ¡Qué alegre eres tú, ser, / con qué alegría universal eterna! / ¡Rompes feliz el ondear del aire, / bogas contrario el ondular del agua! / ¿No tienes que comer ni que dormir? / ¿Toda la primavera es tu lugar? / ¿Lo verde todo, lo azul todo, / lo floreciente todo es tuyo? / ¿No hay temor en tu gloria; / tu destino es volver, volver, volver, / en ronda plata y verde, azul y oro, / por una eternidad de eternidades!

Nos das la mano, en un momento / de afinidad posible, de amor súbito, / de concesión radiante; / y, a tu contacto cálido, / en loca vibración de carne y alma, / nos encendemos de armonía, / nos olvidamos, oveos, de lo mismo, / lucimos, un instante, alegres de oro. / ¡Parece que también / que vamos a volver, volver, volver, / por una eternidad de eternidades! / ¡Y cantamos, reímos por el aire, / por el agua reímos y silbamos!

¿Pero tú no te tienes que olvidar, / ¡Y cantamos, reímos por el aire, / ¡Y cantamos, reímos por el aire, / eres la criatura afortunada, / el májico ser solo, el ser insombre, / el adorado por calor y gracia, / el libre, el embriagante robador, / que, en ronda azul y oro, plata y verde, / riendo vas, silbando por el aire, / por el agua cantando vas, riendo!

(Postías 230–231)

21 Maharishi Vedic Science (1969) not only locates the movement toward bliss in individual human development, but also identifies it as a fundamental principal governing the entire universe: “The purpose of creation is the expansion of happiness” (p. 352).

22 The English translations appearing in brackets throughout this paper (see footnote 9) have been provided so the reader might have some idea of what the original Greek words mean. This should not, however, obscure the fact that for Heidegger a simple definition in terms of the vocabulary of another language cannot capture the meaning of these ancient words. His whole project of interpreting the pre-Socratic fragments, of which “The Anaximander Fragment” is a prime example, was to come to grips with these words, something which he felt could not be accomplished by merely giving their equivalents in a modern language. In this regard, Heidegger states that, “when a translation is only literal it is not necessarily faithful. It is faithful only when its terms are words which speak from the language of the matter itself” (Heidegger, 1984, p. 14).

23 See footnote 14.

24 A significant difference between Heidegger’s view of the poet and that provided by Maharishi Vedic Science is that for Heidegger the great poet often suffers as a result of his divinely inspired song (Steiner, 1987, pp. 142–143). Maharishi Vedic Science states clearly that the experience of the great poet is that of joy not suffering.
25 Maharishi (1966) clarifies the nature of this state from a different angle when he speaks of it in terms of freedom from the binding influence of karma (the field of action, i.e., the field of boundaries): “With the practice of [the] Transcendental Meditation [technique] . . . the value of Being is fully infused into the mind of the performer and the action fails to overshadow his nature. Being, his essential nature, is then maintained and action is performed in such a way that it fails to overshadow his nature. He then remains unbound by action. In this way, when Being is maintained, karma fails to bind” (pp. 141–142).

The personified Being who is simultaneously unbounded Being in both poems is characterized in luminous imagery: 

concesión radiante [radiant concession], 
nos encendemos [we ignite],
lucimos [we glow], and brightly shines his countenance. It would seem no coincidence that Heidegger, when speaking about participation in the experience of Being (as it “comes to language” in the pre-Socratic fragments), also uses the imagery of light: “only in the brilliance of this lightning streak can we translate ourselves to what is said in the fragment.” Maharishi Vedic Science (1992) also speaks in terms of light to describe Being, the field of pure intelligence: “Dynamism of galaxies, stars and everything in the universe is the expression of the quiet brilliant light of intelligence of Natural Law. Natural Law ever awake within everything is the light of life that administers all life with perfect orderliness” (pp. 8–9).

References


