A Fresh Look at Authority and Organisation : towards a spiritual approach for managing illusion

By Gouranga P. Chattopadhyay

Introduction

In this chapter, I take a fresh look at authority and organisation by enquiring into the nature of some of the fundamental notions on which our image of authority are based; boundaries, process, hierarchy. Having introduced the idea - that *all boundaries are illusions* - I offer a case example which illustrates the damaging effects of treating boundaries as though they are real and fixed, rather than created in the mind. Boundaries that are intended to enable engagement with a task are shown to become major impediment to its implementation. Since *management* is largely about creating and providing boundary conditions appropriate for engaging with tasks, it may be considered as the process of *managing illusions* (Chattopadhyay, forthcoming 1998).

I then explore the way in which notions of hierarchy which have their origins in the dynamics of religion and the nuclear family have become fused and confused in organisations. This is contrasted with the example of Fox society (North American Indian), whose religious, family and societal structures offer a different perspective on and model for the experiences of authority, hierarchy and organisation.

Finally, I propose a three-fold educational approach to the development of a mind-set or disposition that can firmly hold the notion of *process* as the reality and *boundaries as illusions*. The first approach has been called socio-analysis (Bain, 1997), which is derived from the experiences of participation in group relations conferences (Miller, 1989), psychoanalytic, systems and organisation behaviour theories. The second approach is grounded in an understanding of the basics of quantum mechanics. This proposes that the cosmos may indeed be boundaryless and that human beings 'see' boundaries because of our limited perceptual ability. The third approach is the pursuit of spirituality, which recognises non-duality as the ultimate reality. This can be engaged with experientially through the methodology of *yoga* (Saraswati, 1989; Yogananda, 1991; Saraswati & Saraswati, 1984), or intellectually through the study of the ancient Indian *darshans* (Gambhirananda, 1989; Nikhilananda, 1987). Each of these approaches or paths on their own, but even more powerfully in combination, can open up fresh possibilities for the experience and exercise of authority in organisations. How fresh ideas of boundaries, such as of time, can get generated

through a combination of the second and the third approaches listed above can be seen in the dialogue between Krishnamurti and Bohm (1986).

I describe the three-fold approach outlined in the previous paragraphs as *spiritual.*

The notion of *process* is usually lost sight of while managing one's experience as one engages with tasks. The approach becomes reductionist and many of one's experiences are denied, largely unconsciously.

I shall illustrate the impact of seeing boundaries as illusions and thereby freed to work at process with a new authority, by means of a case example taken from the experience of consulting to a ball-bearing company (see Chattopadhyay & Lawrence, 1991).

One way of viewing the process of ball-bearing production is to concentrate on the final stages of production, which begin with cutting metal rods. However, the process could also be visualised as starting with the mining operations and ending as the ball-bearings gradually wear out through use. For the works manager, it seems irrelevant to know about the mines, so long as the metal's quality is compatible with the throughput process. It is necessary to hold in mind a boundary for successfully engaging with the task in hand. The problem, however, is that over time the man-made boundaries become taken for granted. Task related problems then remain unsolved and escalate because inappropriate boundary conditions keep bedevelling the process.

During the consultation, several boundary problems were diagnosed as leading to wastage. One was the boundary between the cutting and the grinding sections. If the grinders blamed the cutters, the latter would blame the quality of steel, leading to exchange of memos between the production and the purchase departments. This had become a way of life in the enterprise. The low skilled cutters were unable to technically point out the problem with the material. The grinders had the requisite skill, but the "traditional" boundary between the two sections came in their way of helping the cutters. The solution consisted of merging the two sections, ie. removing the boundary, and over a comparatively short period training the cutters as grinders so that the personnel in the section rotated between the two jobs.

This example highlights, overtly, how the notion of process gets lost because it is sought to be more easily managed by creating boundaries that are seldom, if ever, reviewed over time.

The word "overtly" is used to introduce a more complex, covert phenomenon : the unconscious organisational dynamic.

This ball-bearing company, started as a medium scale industry, was acquired after ten years of its existence by a large industrial house. It installed a new chief executive officer with the brief to introduce new machinery to increase production without adding man power. This was perceived by the workers as heralding large scale

automation and downsizing. For the managers the anxiety was around getting replaced in case they had problems with teething trouble with the new machines. However, there was also the hope, or the fantasy, that the new owners will not make heavy investment in the company unless they were sure of high returns. This notion led to an unconscious collusion between the managers and the workers that continued to keep a high level of wastage, pulling down profit. The concrete suggestions for the change of certain boundary conditions (not discussed above) to reduce wastage and increase productivity actually came from a project group consisting of workers, supervisors and managers. However, all the changes could be smoothly effected because the new CEO accepted the need to allay the anxieties. For the workers, this was done through negotiating a new agreement with the union. For the managers, a long range training programme was introduced. For both the categories, the creation of a representative project group around the consultants was the first step towards containing the anxiety level because this was experienced as a motion of confidence in the employees by the CEO as the representative of the new owners. Once this happened, they felt free to use their personal authority to suggest changes.

The case highlights how some of the organisational processes get lost while using "standard methods" of dealing with "products" such as industrial relations problems and disgruntled or alienated managers. These "products", or terminologies, are also a kind of boundary imposed on human behaviour to make those "manageable", hopefully.

Words, or jargons, such as structure, blue-print, framework, IR, discontent, etc are used to impose boundaries, physical or in the mind, to manage oneself effectively in relation to one's task and environment. But the reality that the boundaries have been imagined in the first place is often forgotten. Consequently problem solving activities flounder because the symptoms are sought to be removed while the function and the functionality of the boundaries remain unexplored.

Boundaries as structures in the mind

It is best to think of an organisation as a picture, or image, within another picture or image in the mind. The larger one is that of the system within which one works and acts from; it has some objectives and goals, it imports resources, transforms those by its throughput process and exports those across the system's boundary with its environment. This is the institution in the mind. The second image is that of the organisation, which is the way in which all institutional resources are related to one another, including the human beings in a role network, in such a manner that the transformation process takes place with the least amount of wastage, adding value to the end products. These images are held in the mind partly consciously, while aspects of the images that produce high anxiety or fear of pain remain largely in the unconscious, leading to unplanned activities based on unexplored assumptions and images (see for eg. Lawrence 1986).

The activities related to connecting the resources by the personnel depend on the decision for engaging with, or disengaging or refraining from various tasks. Each decision assumed as appropriate is based on the authority that one experiences in the situation. The latter depends on how one experiences and conceptualises the contextual boundary conditions. These boundary conditions are both external and internal. Example of the former are aims, objectives and goals of the institutions and of tasks to be engaged with to fulfil them. Tasks, which are also resources, have to be done within boundaries of time and physical space, utilising such other resources as material, machinery, technology and money. The resources internal to the people are skills and knowledge, feelings and emotions, values and attitudes, and assumptions, some of which cannot be checked up easily or directly and some can be, though have not been checked up for one reason or the other. The presence or absence, the quality and the quantity, of the two sets of resources keep acting on one another. For instance, the experience of time as an unlimited resource is likely to prolong the task cycle time so much that it fails to meet any objective or goal; its experience as a very scarce resource may generate high degree of anxiety leading to poor quality of task engagement. Conversely, anxiety about engaging with a task may lead to allocating unrealistic time boundary on it. Therefore the existence of appropriate boundary conditions within which people engage with tasks is an essential feature of successful organisations. This process of creating and holding appropriate boundary conditions is defined here as the process of "management".

The term "management" is also used to define a number of roles. These role-holders are entrusted with the task of providing the boundary conditions and monitoring the organisational processes that follow. They also have the function of controlling deviance. As a group these role-holders are usually referred to as "the management" and they live up to this term so long as they act collectively through sharing authority and responsibility.

Hierarchy as a structure of boundaries in the mind

The structure of a series of boundaries known as *hierarchy* are taken for granted in almost every kind of organisation and is mostly considered as essential for avoiding chaos (which is a mental construct that describes processes that do not approximate the picture of ideal conditions held in the mind).

Hierarchy is not a construct based only on cognition. It also has a high emotional content. Yet hierarchy in work organisations is presented as an aspect of organisation structure devoid of any emotional undertone. This overt denial of the underlying emotional investment makes the impact of hierarchy very difficult to explore.

We have discussed elsewhere (Chattopadhyay & Malhotra 1991, Chattopadhyay 1995) how hierarchy contributes to human wastage through built-in contradictions and potential for destructivity. Some of the major elements of the argument are summarised below.

In most organisations wastage of human potential and other resources occur because management more often than not behave as supervisors and controllers through acting out the hierarchy-in-the-mind, irrespective of its relevance to the system's tasks. The notion of hierarchy is based on the idea of a number of roles subordinated to other roles. This structure also operates in veiled forms even where a flat collegiate system is supposed to exist.

One of the major manifestations of the dysfunctionality of hierarchy is the separation of authority from task. Secondly, since authority in a hierarchic organisation is perceived as a limited resource which is distributed by, notionally, the head of the organisation, most people lose their creativity to some extent through losing touch with their personal authority to think of and try out more effective ways of engaging with tasks (see, for example, Bain 1982). This is further reinforced by linearising wisdom since skill, knowledge and wisdom are supposed to increase as one goes up in the hierarchy, so that the people at the top consciously or unconsciously take steps to have monopoly over information that are considered as important for the organisation. As a result middle managers feel unsafe, the juniors feel alienated from the system, and the non-management cadre often get infantilised (see for eg. Pederson-Krag 1951). Since hierarchy also dilutes accountability, many organisations face its consequences only when the bottom line becomes irreversibly red.

Basically, hierarchy denies that people get to use authority because others give it to them. On joining an organisation, one delegates *upwards* one's authority for such things as time structuring, dress, placement, promotions and demotions, retiring and even for getting sacked by accepting to join the system with all its rules and regulations. Theoretically all these authorities are delegated to the chief executive officer, who then *redelegates* authority appropriately for engaging with tasks. However, the process of initial upward delegation is largely forgotten because of the picture of hierarchy that people carry in their heads. That picture emphasises the notion of unquestionability rather strongly as also blurs the reality that the authority that one delegates upwards is logically related to the organisational tasks that one engages with. This leads to both actual abuse of authority as well as a climate of anxiety about possible abuse of authority. The most glaring example is of making employees who are not covered by industrial laws work for much longer hours than contracted for without any compensation. While this is done to engage with organisational tasks, it also hides the fact that people are made to work overtime because the management has failed to create appropriate boundaries. Terminologies, jargons and myths are created, mostly unconsciously, to buttress the notion of hierarchy.

The almost universal acceptance of hierarchy as an indispensable structural form occurs because, we hypothesise, people carry in their mind, both consciously and unconsciously, its picture as an integral part of interpersonal relationships through experiencing hierarchy in their primary family.

Winnicott (1971) has pointed out how the infant unconsciously responds to the need for total dependence on the mother for survival along with extreme terror (and the associated rage) that the only resource for survival may be withdrawn. This is the kind of feeling which is the stuff that nourishes the picture of hierarchy later on both as nurturing and punitive. At this early stage of life the infant, in its fantasy, creates the breast through its sense of omnipotence when it gets the breastfeed on time and experiences impotence through extreme anxiety and the terror of annihilation when the feed is delayed. This is what Klein (1975, 1975a) has called the paranoid-schizoid phase. Both the feelings of omnipotence and impotence are associated with hierarchy in later life, depending on which end one finds oneself in.

Apart from these experiences lodged in the unconscious that must resonate in later life while experiencing organisational hierarchy, almost all children quite consciously experience hierarchy at home. There is no question either of delegating authority upwards or making any choice about one's parents! Nor do infants and children understand the logic of getting punished as part of the task of being "well brought up". This is the seedbed for the later fantasy that in organisations people get authority by simply taking up various roles. This fantasy denies the reality of the *process of upward delegation of authority related to the demands of organisational tasks*, without which the very concept of organisational roles become meaningless. The childhood experience also leads to the transference of the discomforts associated with authority figures resulting in the feelings of pleasure and pain getting projected on decision makers, who are then perceived as dispensers of reward and punishment. As a result, for eg., the systems of salaries, bonus, promotions, demotions etc. which are theoretically based on the organisational personnels' skills and performance, and the notion of purchase of skill, time etc. are fantasised as systems of reward-punishment. The next step is that the system is actually converted into one of reward-punishment.

Further, I hypothesise that at the root of hierarchy as a fundamental basis for modern organisations lies the notion that differences cannot be managed. Many efforts at managing differences by organisational consultants seem to have only very temporary and contextual impact because their thrust do not take into consideration the basic connection between the perception of difference and hierarchy internalised, which convert most differences into perceptions of inequality. Secondly, that the phenomena called difference is a matter of human invention based on the perceptual limitations of human beings is also denied.

The notion that differences are unmanageable is internalised at infancy when the baby experiences for the first time the boundary between the "I" and the "not-I" which separates it in its experience from the mother. The infant's desire to possess this "other" remains unfulfilled forever. When the infant believes that it is in control of this "other", it feels omnipotent and experiences superordination. When the experience is of loss of control, it feels impotent and experiences subordination. This is how the paranoid-schizoid position lays the foundation for internalised hierarchy. This first experience of boundary in an individual's life is thus the beginning of the process of acknowledging and fantasising boundaries that bring in differences that make objects in

relation to the self as either superordinate or subordinate. From the former one controls the difference while from subordinate position one gets controlled because of the difference. Hence difference remains as an unmanageable experience in the unconscious. This belief in unmanagability is reflected, for example, in the idiom of "ironing out the difference". Either one applies the hot end or one suffers the application of it!

The next hypothesis that I offer is that unquestioned survival of hierarchy in modern work organisations depends on religion as a societal feature that strongly underpins the transference phenomena in work organisations and provides the structural model that the family does not provide.

Religious hierarchy as an unconscious organisational model

Religion and religious organisations have existed long before the advent of organised workforce or governments of any kind. I have hypothesised elsewhere (Chattopadhyay 1994) an unconscious function of religion and the language which the child accepts as the mother tongue. This is related to ego consciousness (Erikson 1968). Ego consciousness develops in infancy and continues to get organised, unconsciously, right through life. However, some of the earliest bases of the articulated aspects of the unconscious organisation is done in the language that the child learns at home. In later life any attack on that language is likely to be experienced as a threat to the core of one's identity, one's ego consciousness. This results in extremely violent defenses, including aggression on those perceived as attacking one's language. At the other end of the continuum death awaits to destroy the ego, along with the rest of what the person experiences as "I" and "me" both consciously and unconsciously. Belief in "afterlife" is offered by all religions supplying, albeit unconsciously, a "lifeline" to the ego after death.. Consequently certain aspects of religion, like much of its organisational precepts, get internalised by people beyond consciousness. This process is so strong that even those who consciously renounce or denounce religion remain part of the process so long as they do not actually get in touch with their unconscious "religious behaviour".

Reed (1978) has hypothesised how religion, through its regular communal rituals assists the believers in regressing to a state where they project the "divine", like compassion, love etc., in them on to a Supreme Being. Towards the end of the ritual they are assisted by the priest to reintroject those "divine" qualities and put them to use in the society at large. Reed's theory, however, leaves out the equal probability of projecting all that are "non-divine" (like, for example, some of the "seven deadly sins") . For instance, in the Old Testament God has certainly been painted as proud, envious, angry and perhaps even covetous (see Fromm 1991, Biran and Chattopadhyay 1997, Miller 1993). The belief in God's anger and engaging in wantonly destructive behaviour is so strongly believed by modern societies that all insurance companies are allowed the legal right not to underwrite or compensate for

destruction due to Acts of God, which are put in the same category as wars and nuclear explosions!

Apart from thus projecting on to the notion of a supreme being both the "divine" and the "non-divine" human characteristics through its institutional rites and rituals, religion also articulates the unquestionability and the lack of the possibility of any appeal against perceived unfair or unjust treatment by the superior role-holder (i.e. abuse of authority and power) which mostly remain latent and unarticulated in the family as an institution. As discussed elsewhere (Chattopadhyay 1997), religion as a process gets deeply and unconsciously internalised. As a result, for eg, while the philosophies known as *dharma* that were born in the Indian sub-continent, such as what are now known as Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, or even the later Sikhism or the Khalsa, were actually propagated by the founders as ideal ways of life and not as the words of any supreme being, those have been accepted by both the believers and the philosophers of later eras as forms of religion. Once the original ideas and thoughts get associated with a supreme being, those also become unquestionable and retribution for acts contrary to those ideas and thoughts are expected to be accepted without the possibility of appeal. This is then extended to the hierarchy of priestly institution. They are the managers and the administrators of the laity, who are the "others" in the society, as are the "others" in modern work organisations who are not managers.

This idea of religious organisations providing a model for organisational hierarchy is supported by Miller. He makes it clear that in his view "the pantheon of any society can be seen as a projective system, whereby the essential features of the social organisation of the projective society are attributed to a group of supernatural beings, whose relations reflect those existing among the people themselves" (Miller 1955, 278-279).

In effect, Miller's views come very near to my hypothesis. What I have added is that this kind of projection is actually the transference of the infant's relationship with the parents, which is then reintrojected.

An alternative mind-set

This idea of transference and reintrojection in the form of organisational hierarchy is very much supported by Miller's description of the Fox (the Central North American Algonquians) pantheon and the nature of authority distribution in their society. In the Fox society the notion of hierarchy does not enter the socio-religious system. Even the notions of hierarchy of species or the perceived superiority of the humans over nature, or of the living over the non-living are non-existent there. Nor is there a hierarchic arrangement of supernatural beings. Their beliefs about afterlife also reflect, as in life so in death, that the Fox remain concerned over the ability to use one's personal authority without being ordered about by anyone.

However, people do feel influenced and people do exercise some power in Fox society too for coordinating collective action. An examination of some of their myths and actual interpersonal behaviour brings out the notion of power and its distribution among the Fox. This notion of power is behind several formalised agencies to coordinate collective activities. Those agencies or roles that have great power have very limited tenure and those that have some sort of permanence have extremely limited power. This concept of power gets reflected in terms of authority. Each individual feels highly responsible for one's behaviour according to the societal norms through mobilising one's personal authority. Subordination to others' directives implies one's inadequacy in dealing with those norms. This capacity is developed through the child rearing practices and is further underscored by rituals and myths.

For instance, the Fox father does not represent the almost unquestionable, nurturing and punitive authority figure to the child and all persons senior in age are to be respected there, and not obeyed. This kind of "horizontal" relationship is also underscored in a number of myths that symbolically emphasise the severance of the father-son dependency tie and lead to the internalisation of the idea of personal authority and self dependence. There being no parent-child hierarchy at home and the later internalisation of self-dependence, there is little likelihood of later transference of unlimited authority and hierarchy in other spheres of life.

This kind of internalisation has resulted in three characteristics in the Fox. Every individual can directly relate to the conceptualised source of power. This frees one from the need to be dependent upon others' evaluation of oneself to feel self esteem. Secondly, every individual also relates directly to "the broadly representative social decision-making agency"(P.287). This in its turn develops both individuation and consensus making skill. Lastly, the individual also has direct access to and the knowledge of "the body of procedural rules governing interpersonal interaction" (P.287). This adds self confidence to self esteem, leading to the freedom to make one's choice because no one monopolises information.

I am arguing that logically hierarchy should be replaced in modern organisations by a different system of levels of authority that will eliminate the built-in conflict and destructive potential of hierarchy and greatly release creative energy. This is where the discussion of the power and authority structure in the Fox society becomes relevant.

In Fox society at the two poles of an individual's life there are societal mechanisms to underscore the absence of authority in a hierarchic fashion. The individual is psychologically released in the family from parental authority so that it does not get internalised to be later transferred to other forms of institutions. At the end of one's life also one anticipates as a "good" Fox an "afterlife" where ones "lives" according to one's choice based on personal authority. But in almost all other societies one's subordination to one's parents in infancy is allowed to be internalised and emphasised by religion through the idea that even if one had succeeded in questioning one's parental authority as a grown up daughter or son, after death one's "I-ness" (soul in some form or the other) submits to the unquestionable infinite authority of the

unknowable Supreme Being or a series of supernatural beings. The internalised hierarchy at home gets societal recognition through religion with the backing of all the force of anxiety, both conscious and unconscious, of the altogether unknown.

Later on in the depressive position one feels potent enough to be able to repair the fantasised damage done to the mother in earlier infancy. It is this experience of potency that in adult life leads one to mobilise one's personal authority and actually deal with differences to the extent that one does not feel totally impotent or powerless. In all hierarchic organisational situations one thus moves between omnipotent and impotent stances occasionally relieved by the feeling of potency.

Reed's (1978) treatment of the process of religion as a form of oscillation in a sense draws one's attention to the process of how one's potency may be recharged despite many kinds of uncertainties and other kinds of anxiety provoking experiences that people face in life all the time. Part of the oscillation process is the fantasised unity with some kind of a divine form or power, which in every religion (other than among the Fox, as we know so far from available anthropological literature) is superordinate to all beings. This temporary unity emphasises the permanence of difference which is unmanageable. Since no average human being is devoid of the fear of the unknown apparently emptiness beyond death, even those who do not participate in religious activities unconsciously leave the task of religion in their own lives to others. This aspect of societal dynamics has been ably discussed by Reed.

Hierarchy therefore, upon fresh examination, also appears as a social defence (for an exhaustive list of references on social defence see Gilmore and Krantz 1990, Bain 1997a, Harding 1996). Briefly, this defence is probably against (a) the anxieties around having to be accountable to the many subordinate role holders for those decisions that misfire and the price that one logically should pay for taking those, and (b) the anxiety of how one deals with the trust of the subordinate role holders. This trust is implicit in the upward delegation of task related authority. For the "others", hierarchy is a defence against the anxieties associated with possible failed dependency and the consequent disillusionment that always hangs as the sword of Damocles. Viewed from such a perspective, the social defence may well operate in a "global domain" (Bain 1997a).

Further, Chapman's (1996) concept of task corruption opens the way to examine hierarchy present in the family as an institution, in religion and in work organisations in a new light by exploring the extent to which these practices have incorporated phenomenal tasks (i.e. unconscious engagement with tasks that actually counter the stated, normative primary task) that in fact hinder the development of minds that can creatively contribute towards change. It is possible to hypothesise two reasons for this. One is the vested interest of the parental generation to retain their authority and leadership. Secondly, bringing up children according to cultural prescriptions also means glossing over the uncertainties that culture rationalises in every society and also reinforces the idea for both the parents and the children that the former always know best as long as the latter are in their "tender age". It is hypothesised in this context

that the task of bringing up children to be creatively contributive in society becomes corrupted into producing "chips of the old block", rather like slightly faded carbon copies of the original, in order to block the possibility of change. One could think of the latest scientific "development" called "cloning" in this context as the hope of the establishment to freeze time and thus once and for all stop the process of societal change by replacing carbon copies with photocopies!

In religion the phenomena of hierarchy defends both the priests and the laity from the anxiety around the unknown and the unknowable Supreme Being. A religious hierarchy by definition manages the absurdity of knowing and understanding the will of the unknown and unknowable Supreme Being or gods.

In work organisations, likewise, the chief executive officers seem to know another kind of the absurd. This is what the "others" are trusting the CEO for, or are entrusting the CEO with. Hierarchy takes care of it by removing the possibility of exploring the nature of the possible emotion laden upward delegations made by the subordinate role holders.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore the kinds of phenomenal tasks that emerge in religion and work organisations as the consequence. Just as I have indicated above a possible phenomenal task that emerges in the family as an institution, so also one could think of the processes of differentiation and exclusion present in most religions (Fromm 1991) as phenomenal tasks in religious institutions, and the processes that act as barriers to learning and transformation (or, proactive change) in work organisations as phenomenal tasks there.

It thus seems that despite intellectual realisation that the logic of hierarchy is one that leads to wastage of human potential and acknowledgment that differences need to be managed for creativity to flourish, in the end unmanageability of differences as a characteristic of hierarchy prevails and at best in organisations people oscillate between the infantile paranoid-schizoid stance and the adult potent stance. In the paranoid-schizoid stance the adult can be, and often is, very destructive in order to defend oneself from the anxiety of annihilation, albeit largely unconsciously. Further, the infantile need to possess the "other" in the adult manifested in the form of acquiring both power and material objects as quickly as possible has resulted in the use of modern technology in ways that are clearly destroying the earth and its atmosphere. It seems to be an unconscious process of being driven to capture the "good breast" and destroy the "bad breast" which may well end destroying altogether the metaphorical mother who "owns both the good and the bad breast", which is actually creation as we are capable of perceiving.

The question that now arises is can one move beyond contextual interventions such as the Green Peace movement or various packages of managing difference interventions that organisational consultants offer.

The action choice

The answer lies in integrating harnessing efforts to spread three kinds of educational approaches.activities. One is popularising the basic notions of quantum mechanics through familiarity with the experiments that have led to the formulation of the hypothesis that all the boundaries that we experience are the result of the *limited nature of human perceptual ability* (see, for example, Zukav 1982, Heisenburg 1974). This really means that the entire cosmos is boundaryless. Boundarylessness means *non-duality*, which in its turn establishes that differences are matters of perceptual limitation, which immediately lowers the possibility of investing emotion on either side of the boundary of the perceived differences, or on the boundary itself. Emotions will nevertheless be invested, but probably the strength of such emotional investments will be low enough to ensure such explorations as may show some of the boundaries as irrelevant to the objectives and tasks for which they stand.

The second step is experiential learning of group processes. With a skilled consultant highlighting the processes that are usually filtered out by the majority, it is possible to actually experience how beyond one's consciousness individuals and groups relate to one another, take in and also put into other individuals and groups ideas, thoughts and even feelings. That is, one may actually get in touch with the experience of how one unconsciously takes in other people's emotions and ideas, and acts those out on others' behalf, as also keeps getting influenced or keeps influencing others after the first unconscious s tep (Ogden 1991). Further, it is also possible to get in touch with the otherwise largely unconscious experience of relating to groups in fantasy that colours the actual intergroup relations (Biran & Chattopadhyay 1997) and how one's relationship with various organisations that one belongs to get affected by the picture of the institution that one holds in the mind (Armstrong,1991; Chattopadhyay, 1997a). This kind of experiential work goes under the generic name of "Group Relations Conference". Understanding of their theoretical bases (Bion 1971, Rice 1965, Miller 1989, 1990, 1990a) and repeated participation in those conferences have resulted in the development of theories, concepts and methodologies subsumed under the term of socio-analysis (Bain 1997) that are used for helping work organisations to diagnose unconscious dynamics that throw up problems, fashion or invent interventions and redraw various boundaries for greater task effectiveness. This kind of experience of the relationship between boundaries of task with various other kinds of boundaries is an important learning experience that becomes very relevant in step three, as we shall see later. Such experiences also put people in touch with some of their unconscious defences and strongly point towards psychic boundarylessness. For the thinking person who has the courage to accept the possibility that other perceived boundaries may also be questioned, these experiences open the door for further exploration into the nature of boundaries in general.

The third step is the most important one and also a logical extension of the other two steps. This is the step of developing *spirituality*.

I make a clear distinction between religiosity and spirituality. Religion strongly upholds the notion of frozen boundaries through introducing the notion of duality - the difference between man and divinity that underscores the notions of hierarchy and unbridgeable inequalities.

The practise of religion has yet another built in problem, which has been highlighted by Chapman (1996,16). It is that if, for whatever reason, an individual or an institution develops hatred for its primary task, that task gets corrupted (i.e. changed) mostly beyond consciousness leading to the sabotage of institutional objectives.

The notion of the primary task of religion discussed by Reed (1978) also appears as an absurd task because in the process of oscillation the projections of the "non-divine", or "profane", or even "evil" characteristics of the worshippers do not get filtered out. This is also a reason why most religions set up at least one other religion (or a sect), to be the repository of all that are considered, unconsciously, as evil in one's own religious group (or sect). The "other" unconsciously receives the internalised evil of one's own group or community (Biran and Chattopadhyay 1997). This is further complicated by the fact that the priests in all religions are the bureaucrats in religious structures, and one of the characteristics of bureaucracy is highlighting differences, rather than integration (Fromm 1991).

Religion can be treated also as the result of institutionalisation of spirituality. Alastair Bain (personal conversation) suggests that people like Buddha and Jesus, (as also the composers of the *Upanishads*) had the objective of assisting people to experience and internalise whatever the seers experienced as "God" (as a metaphor). Buddha had, as a result, avoided answering all questions that focused on a supreme being; Jesus had talked about the "Kingdom of Heaven" being here, which Bain interprets, following his understanding of Bion (1970), as the internalised picture of cosmic oneness in the mind. Such a phenomena of internalisation would obviously mean the mobilisation and exercise of personal authority for one's action choices and activities. This, in its turn, would pose a great threat for the establishment that represents vested interest. This was one of the reasons why the early followers of Buddha, Jesus and Guru Nanak (the Khalsa or the Sikh) and the Sufis were sought to be ruthlessly suppressed. To survive and spread the ideas of these great seers the followers had to get organised, which inevitably led to institutionalisation. The ideas became ideals which could not be explored any more, faith became belief and many boundaries, both abstract and concrete, were created so that religion became separated from spirituality. The process of religionising the *Upanishadic* ideas is buried in the historyless several thousand years when in the Indian sub-continent education was based on experiential learning and verbal discourses by the seers, which were memorised by the pupils once they accepted the logic.

A paradox was thus created by institutionalising spirituality. While spirituality is about experiencing boundarylessness, the followers of the spiritual seers had to create strong, highly structured organisations with both external and internal boundaries in their effort to safeguard the message of boundarylessness. In course of time *this*

process of survival and growth of religious organisations became internalised as a social defence against spirituality, yet it is spirituality that questions the very existence of boundaries and paves the way for reviewing and exploring boundaries of various kinds for greater task effectiveness in organisations. Religion thus in reality freezes not only boundaries, but also gets people to internalise the process of freezing boundaries leading to glaring acts of mismanagement causing destruction, like for eg., genocide.

Limitation of space puts a discussion on spirituality and how in practical terms its pursuit can be made part of management education remains beyond the scope of this essay. All that may be indicated here is that it is worthwhile considering the theoretical basis (the *Tantra* philosophy) and the practice of *yoga* (both the eightfold system recorded by Patanjali and other forms of *Raj Yoga*) as a methodology for pursuing spiritual education for increased managerial effectiveness. Not withstanding the many secondary useful impacts of practising *yoga*, it essentially channelises energy flow in a way that results in assisting the individual to fulfill one's potentiality. This would also mean sensitising the individual towards unconscious processes since those take place in the form of energy flow of a kind, the precise nature of which we are yet to understand.

Conclusion

This essay began by pointing out that while managing effectively essentially consist of creating boundary conditions appropriate for engagement with tasks, that very act paradoxically often leads to mismanagement through losing touch with process. This largely happens because of the unconscious dynamics of groups and organisations that remain unexplored.

It has been shown through an examination of some of the basic characteristics of the nature of boundaries in modern organisations that the religious organisational model, with its assumptions and the associated emotions, has been unconsciously adopted for work organisations. This has contributed towards not only human wastage in work organisations, but has also led to other kinds of destructive activities, including abdication of personal authority.

This leads to the conclusion that alternative models of conceiving and building organisations have to be searched for or invented in order to create conditions for people to take more authority for engaging with tasks creatively.

What is of great importance to note is that since management as a process is concerned with creating and holding appropriate boundary conditions for engagement with institutional tasks, it also requires on the part of those who manage to understand that the process is in fact one of *managing illusions* by mobilising one's personal authority. In fact this understanding needs to be developed in every individual in all kinds of institutions since it is difficult to imagine anyone who has no responsibility for any part of organisational processes. If one is responsible for a process, one is also managing some boundary, however insignificant it may appear compared to some

others who have far greater responsibilities. A logical extension of this argument is that education for managers and entrepreneurs need to incorporate in their curriculum the three steps : (a) familiarity with the basic notions of quantum mechanics, (b) experiential learning through participation on group relations conferences and (c) development of spirituality, as the term has been defined in this essay, for more effective management of organisations.

References

Armstrong, David, 'The "Institution in the Mind" : Reflections on the Relation of Psycho-Analysis to Work Institutions' (Grubb Institute, London, 1991).

Bain, Alastair, 'A "College of socio-analysis", an idea', *AISA News - a News-letter of the Australian Institute of Social Analysis,* 5, Summer (1997), 3-5.

Bain, Alastair, 'Social Defences Against Organisational Learning', *Human Relations,* Special Issue (1997) Forthcoming.

Bain, Alastair, *The Baric Experiment - the design of jobs and organisation for the expression and growth of human capacity,* (The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, London, 1982), Occasional Papers 4, 2-4.

Bion, W.R., *Attention and Interpretation,* (Tavistock Publications, London, 1970)..

Bion, W.R., *Experiences in Groups*, (Tavistock Publications, London, 1961).

Biran, Hanna & Chattopadhyay, Gouranga P., 'The Burden of the Barbarian Within', *Free Associations,* 7/2 (London, 1997).

Chapman, Jane, *Hatred and Corruption of Task,* Presentation to Australian Institute of Social Analysis Scientific Meeting, September (Melbourne 1996) 16.

Chattopadhyay, Gouranga P. 'Hierarchy and Modern Organisation', *International Perspectives on Organisations in Times of Turbulence,* Long, Susan (Ed.), (Swinburne University of Technology & AISA, Hawthorn, Victoria) 13-22.

Chattopadhyay, Gouranga P., 'The Battle for Boundaries', *Indian Society for Applied Behavioural Science Newsletter* (1994), 8/3-4, 4-6.

Chattopadhyay, Gouranga P., 'Institution in the mind', *Here and Now* (1997a), 10/3, 9-12.

Chattopadhyay, Gouranga P., *Bhagavat Geeta: A Treatise on Managing Critical Decisions - In Work Organisations, in Society, in Family,* (Eureka Publishers, Calcutta, 1997) Introduction.

Chattopadhyay, Gouranga P., 'Managing Illusion', *Free Associations* (London, 1998) Forthcoming.

Chattopadhyay, Gouranga P. & Lawrence, W. Gordon, 'The Private Nature of Public Sector Enterprises in India', O*rganisational Culture,* Gouranga P. Chattopadhyay, (Discovery Publishing House, New Delhi, 1991) 306-344.

Chattopadhyay, Gouranga P. & Malhotra, Ashok, 'Hierarchy and Modern Organisation : A Paradox Leading to Human Wastage', *The Indian Journal of Social Work,* (1991) 52/4, 561-584.

Erikson, Erik. H, *Youth : Identity and Crisis*, (Faber & Faber, London, 1968).

Fromm, Eric, *You Shall Be As God : A Radical Interpretation of the Old Testament and Its Traditions,* (An Owl Book, New York, 1991) 22-23.

Gambhirananda, Swami, *Eight Upanishads,* 1 & 2, (Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, 1989).

Harding, Wendy, 'Hierarchy as a Social Defense', Masters thesis in Business, Organisation Behaviour, (Swinburne University of Science & Technology, Melbourne, 1996).

Heisenberg, Warner, *Across the New Frontier,* (Harper & Row, New York, 1974).

Klein, Melanie, *Envy and Gratitude and Other Essays,* (Hogarth Press, London, 1975).

Klein, Melanie, *Love, Guilt and Reparation and Other Works,* (Dell Publishing, New York, 1975a).

Gilmore, Thomas N. & Krantz, James, 'The Splitting of Leadership and Management as a Social Defense', *Human Relations,* 43/2.

Krishnamurti, J. & Bohm, David, *Ending of Time : Thirteen Dialogues,* (Victor Gollancz Limited, London, 1986).

Lawrence, W.G., 'A Psychoanalytic Perspective for Understanding Organisational Life', *When the Twain Meet:Western Theory & Eastern Insights in Understanding Indian Organisations,* Chattopadhyay, Gouranga P. *et al,* (A. H. Wheeler, Allahabad, 1985,47-66).

Miller, Walter B., 'Two Concepts of Authority', *American Anthropologist, 57* (1955),
271-289.

Miller, Eric, 'The Vicissitudes of Identity', Opening Address to the International Group Relations & Scientific Conference:Exploring Global Social Dynamics, Vic., Australia', *Document No.2T670* (Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, London, 1993).

Miller, Eric, *The 'Leicester' Model: Experiential Study of Group and Organisa--tional Processes,* (Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, London, 1989), Occasional Papers 10.

Miller, Eric, 'Experiential Learning in Groups I : The development of the Leicester Model", *The Social Engagement of Social Science, A Tavistock Anthology I,* Trist, E. & Murray, H., (eds.), (Free Association Books, London, 1990) 165-185.

Miller, Eric, 'Experiential Learning in Groups II: Recent developments in dissemination and application', *The Social Engagement of Social Science, A Tavistock Anthology II,* Trist, E. & Murray, H., (Eds.), (Free Association Books, London, 1990a) 186-198.

Nikhilananda, Swami, *The Mandukya Upanishad,* (5th Edn., Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, 1987.)

Ogden, Thomas, H., *Projective Identification and Therapeutic Technique,* (Jason Aronson Inc., London, 1991).

Pederson-Krag, G., 'A Psycho-Analytic Approach to Mass Production", *Psycho-Analytic Quarterly,* 20, (1951) 434-451.

Reed, Bruce D., *The Dynamics of Religion: Process and Movement in Christian Churches,* (Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 1978).

Swaraswati, Swami Satsangananda & Swaraswati, Swami Satyananda, K*arma Sanyasa,* 1st. Edn., (Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, 1984) 1-2.

Saraswati, Swami Satyananda, *Tattwa Shuddhi - The Tantric Practice of Inner Purification,* (Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, 1984).

Saraswati, Swami Satyananda, *Four Chapters on Freedom : Commentary on Yoga Sutras of Patanjali,* 3rd Edn., (Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, 1989).

Yogananda, Paramahansa, *The Autobiography of a Yogi,* (Jaico Publishing House, 2nd Indian Edn., 9th impression, Bombay, 1991).

Zukav, Gary, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters,* (Fontana/Collins, U.K., 1982).