

and would have added to the richness of his work. Finally, the entire narrative is presented without an historical analysis of the evolution of the U.S. fast-food industry. This historical approach would have enhanced Newman's analysis by providing a context for understanding the contemporary human resources practices being followed in the industry. In summary, Newman's brave attempt to understand the working conditions is greatly hampered by his inability to go beyond a narrowly defined managerial agenda and his lack of willingness to offer serious institutional insights into the McWorld.

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***Dare to think the unthought known? A festschrift for Gouranga Chattopadhyay***  
Edited by Ajeet N. Mathur. Tampere: Avioairut Publishing, 2006. Price 38 Euros

Ajeet Mathur in the book notes "a reasonable person submits, complies and adapts and enables status quo to be preserved, whereas an unreasonable person questions, explores and by rocking the boat, disturbs things and people and is regarded as bit of a nuisance – but by doing so brings about changes. Thus all progress is said to depend on unreasonable people, pushing the envelope so to speak". By this yardstick, Gouranga Chattopadhyay is certainly a most unreasonable man.

Group Relations Conferences (also known as Working Conferences) were started by The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, London, in 1957, based on the pioneering work of W. R. Bion who, as Gouranga Chattopadhyay likes to point out, was born in India. Group Relations Conferences started in India in 1973, which was before any country outside the United Kingdom began to offer it. The Indian Institute of Management Calcutta has had a special role in promoting group relations work in

India, as it was while working at the Institute, that Gouranga Chattopadhyay offered the series of conferences between 1973 and 1992 (when he retired) which established India as a centre of group relations practice and thinking – Gouranga being both the pioneer and inspirator.

The design and structure of the group relations conferences have undergone many changes in various countries the world over these past 50 years. However, the focus on groups as systems, understanding the unconscious dynamics in individuals, groups and systems and learning through experience has remained intact. In his excellent introduction to the book, the editor points to the diversity of people, places, thinking, and contexts, that the book represents as also to the recurrence (almost serendipitous) of common themes and cross fertilization of thoughts. It is perhaps not surprising, and again quite fitting, that this should be evident in a festschrift in honor of Gouranga Chattopadhyay - because that is the catalyst-confronter role that this “unreasonable” man has played.

Group Relations has been at the centre of Gouranga’s life and passion. It is evident in the contributions of many keen practitioners and theorizers of group relations in this book that his seminal work on hierarchy, immature dependency and modern organisations as well as understanding of spirituality and of boundaries as illusions have deeply impacted the approach and thinking of many seasoned practitioners.

Gouranga Chattopadhyay has steadfastly practiced what he preached. As his colleagues and friends around the world will testify he is an intrepid explorer – walking into the unknown with courage, wonderment, a sense of humour and great humility. The following quote attributed to the Buddha is also so typical of his manner of engagement in the learning spaces and processes that he has such deep commitment to.

Believe nothing just because a so-called wise person said it. Believe nothing just because a belief is generally held. Believe nothing just because it is said in ancient books. Believe nothing just because it is said to be of divine origin. Believe nothing just because someone else believes it. Believe only what you yourself test and judge to be true.

The appendices in the book of a brief biography and candid reflections provide a very interesting backdrop to the book – not just because they provide yet under window to the multifaceted person that Gouranga is, but also bring one up-to-speed to current thinking on the state of group relations institutions in a freewheeling style – relaxed, honest and intimate.

The contributions in this book also are testimony to another central theme in Gouranga’s life the insistence on application of ones learning – without which the learning is

hollow- has no meaning. The contributors in the book grapple with this question and challenge in different ways.

The central challenge of application and the invitation to explore the impact of intra and inter-group on world affairs is taken up in Alan Shafer's 'Group Relations and the Politics of Engagement' and Ajeet Mathur's 'Paradoxes of Globalisation'. Shafer wonders why group relations work has not been used enough in understanding and working with wider social change issues – particularly at community, national and global levels. He identifies what he terms the politics of disengagement as a process that encourage splitting in a paranoid ethos. He sees the processes of disengagement, defining the other as the enemy and the growth of fundamentalism of many kinds – with political, religious, and unchecked consumerism – all being forms of fundamentalism. The need for understanding unconscious processes and particularly to be in touch with one's depressive anxieties as a prerequisite for leadership in an increasingly globalised and yet atomized world is Shafer's call.

Somewhat connected and bringing in the new thinking in group relations – a sort of daring to think the new and unthought- is evident in the contributions of Shelley Ostroff 'Whispers of the Whole: Tending to the System by the System for the System' and Alastair Bain's 'Sources of Anxiety – the Double Strands of Anxiety and Wonder'. Bain brings in a refreshing and very hopeful view of understanding anxiety. Both these pieces are almost new age in the way they effortlessly link the rigour of thinking and writing about group relations with ideas about wellness spiritual traditions and human aspirations. Bain suggests that the anxiety of adults, lest something get out of control, introduces to children new experiences of authority. The anxieties of those in power prevail and lead to hierarchies of control. Ostroff expands the concepts of group relations to the idea of understanding purpose, health and wellness in systems. The metaphor of understanding the system as a body is particularly useful

A similar exploration of holism and hope is offered in the article by John Bazalgette, Bruce Irvine and Colin Quine 'The Absolute in the Present: Role –the hopeful road to transformation' - colleagues at the Grubb Institute, UK which is known for its seminal contributions to work on group relations on linking the human (and/in) the divine. The paper deals with the idea of spirituality – evolved from within a clear Christian tradition – but a Christianity that seeks to dare think the unthought – that opens itself up to influences from many other traditions. The desire to be the fullest that one can be – what they term "in the likeness of God" is what impels human beings to take risks to dare to inquire, heal, and transform. They describe quite elaborately the Grubb institutes frameworks in conferences and workshops and consultancy opportunities as interlinked ways in which this pursuit is nurtured. In an interesting comparison between the

conferences offered by the Grubb in 2005 with an international conference in India in the same year, they help us understand how universal these quests are – how human beings all over the world in different context are searching for ways to understand some of the complexities inside of ourselves and the mirroring of this in the complexities we create in the world outside.

‘Religious systems in organisations: mess or messiah’ by Jane Chapman and Sally Eastoe and ‘This used to be my playground : Work /Family Connections’ by Susan Long are two articles that deal with specific case studies to exemplify what happens when experiences conscious and unconscious from one space get pushed –imported into another, to which they are inappropriate, dysfunctional and messy.

The opening chapter by Ajeet Mathur ‘Dare to Think the Unthought known’ which makes a strong argument for the need for a hermeneutical primary task is scholarly and elaborate, and is definitely not easy reading . Sari Joutimaski’s piece ‘Around the Corner, Over the Hedge’ links adroitly the ideas of exploration and the unknown to the culture of innovation risk taking and almost child like wonder of what may be found around the corner. Joutimaski quite honestly states that her article raises more questions than answering them – and I suppose – why not! If one is not caught up with the rigid notions of what an article should be like and the purpose it should serve – then Joutimaski’s serves as a perfect example of the issues she raises! Some of the invited contributions like A.K. Sengupta’s very rigorous and insightful analysis ‘Decline in Trade Union Power’ based on years of observation on the decline of trade unions in India does not specifically focus on group relations concepts and theories as the other contributions do.

Perhaps one of the dilemmas in the group relations space and which is also reflected in this book is making group relations theory and scholarly writing more accessible to a wider readership – particularly members and potential members of conferences. Some of the contributions while perhaps not intended to keep a wider readership at the distance may end up doing that. The is the very contradiction and myth that group relations work has always attempted to blow – that it is for a chosen few and not about the miracle and struggle of very human everyday life. That being said, this anthology is undoubtedly an eclectic and creative contribution to group relations thinking and practice. It will be valued by anyone with a serious interest in groups relations work not just because of the people who have written, and what they have written, but the very fascinating mosaic that has been produced by the invitation to a set of people to contribute. The individuality and yet commonality in the different pieces

once again affirms that sense of wonder and familiarity of stepping into the unknown. The invitation is clear and the rewards of doing so are also demonstrated!

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