

# Cognitive Analytic Therapy and the Politics of Mental Health 2018

Book Review By Dr Babak Fozooni

Therapists who take politics seriously

This book brings together a series of left-wing therapists and counsellors who using a Cognitive Analytic Therapy (CAT) framework, attempt to make sense of mental health issues. For me what sets it apart from previous attempts is the emphasis on social class and capitalism- topics that most mainstream writers either ignore or end up analysing inadequately.

However, here, capitalism, alienation and class conflicts are foregrounded and linked to psychological distress. The analysis takes into account the three dimensions of psychology: intra-psychology (what goes on inside an individual's mind); inter-psychology

(our relationships with those around us); and, extra-psychology (all the distal socio-economic and cultural factors that influence our discourse and behaviour).

Uncommonly for an anthology, there are no weak contributions. I find all chapters informative. There are three chapters written by Hilary Brown that are particularly good. Chapter 2 which looks at reciprocal roles in an unequal world, chapter 11 (co-written with Julie Lloyd) about working with people affected by child sexual abuse, and chapter 15 entitled, owning privilege and acknowledging racism.

Another fascinating contribution is chapter 16 which discussed the application of CAT in an Italian context.

Rachel Pollard (chapter 3) shows how different therapists are pulling CAT in different directions, some towards de-radicalisation and others (such as the contributors in this book) toward a closer analysis of issues round class, race, and gender. I also find useful the numerous diagrams that have been used throughout to illustrate various phenomena and life trajectories.

In conclusion, there is sufficient political nous, integrity and innovation in this book to make it an essential text for social oriented therapists, clients, and students of psychology. An outstanding contribution.

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