



# Alcoholic Thinking: Language, Culture, and Belief in Alcoholics Anonymous

*Danny M. Wilcox*

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Based on long-term observation of Alcoholics Anonymous, the author focuses on cultural rather than personal causes of drug dependence. The author also discusses how the symbolic action of AA language and culture is the key to recovery. This study yields critical information about the development and practice of alcoholism and other drug dependence. Through the shared linguistic and cultural interaction of AA, the U.S. cultural ideology that emphasizes individualism, personal achievement, self-control, and self-reliance is shown to result in conflict; thus the gap between the perceived ideal and reality intensifies feelings of separation, alienation, and isolation leading to dependency.

This detailed ethnographic narrative of Alcoholics Anonymous is based on three years of participant observation. The study suggests that anyone can be victimized by alcoholic thinking. Anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, health care and professional social services organizations will be interested in this book.

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