

Abstract

“Alcoholics and Social Disorder” seeks to understand why most alcoholics in Thai society fail to free themselves from habitual drinking and alcoholism. To explore this problem, I find “illness narrative,” a concept proposed by Arthur Kleinman, a powerful tool to engage with patients while being able to bear witness to their suffering and the fragility of their human conditions. The main finding of this research is that though generally viewed and treated by medical staff as the patient’s personal problem, alcoholism is closely related to the political economy of alcohol business. Monopolized by a few major corporations and legally sanctioned by the Thai state, alcohol business makes available alcohol beverage for people of all ages and classes. This results in the increase in alcohol consumption. Such a condition also pushes people suffered by alcoholism to the margin of the moral community. That is to say, because alcohol production and consumption is not illegal, alcoholism – though a threat to social well-being and stability – is not viewed as a serious or urgent problem. This worsens the situation of the alcoholics for they are viewed negatively by society while being denied helps. Thus, to alleviate the suffering of the alcoholics, all parties concern have to transform the social roots of the illness as well.