



# **Control and Consolation in American Culture and Politics: Rhetoric of Therapy (Rhetoric and Society series)**

*Dana L. Cloud*

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In this perceptive analysis, Dana Cloud traces the replacement of social and political activism by the pursuit of personal, psychological change. She identifies the new movement as the "rhetoric of therapy", where a persuasive cultural discourse that applies concepts such as coping and adapting replaces active attempts to reform flawed systems of social and political power. Cloud focuses on the therapeutic discourse that emerged after the Vietnam War and links its rise to specific political and economic interests.

Critical case studies identify the extent to which therapeutic discourses are persuasive, including: the rhetoric of "family values"; media coverage of "support groups" during the Gulf War; Gloria Steinem's *Revolution from Within*; the film *Thelma and Louise*; and literature of the New Age Movement.

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