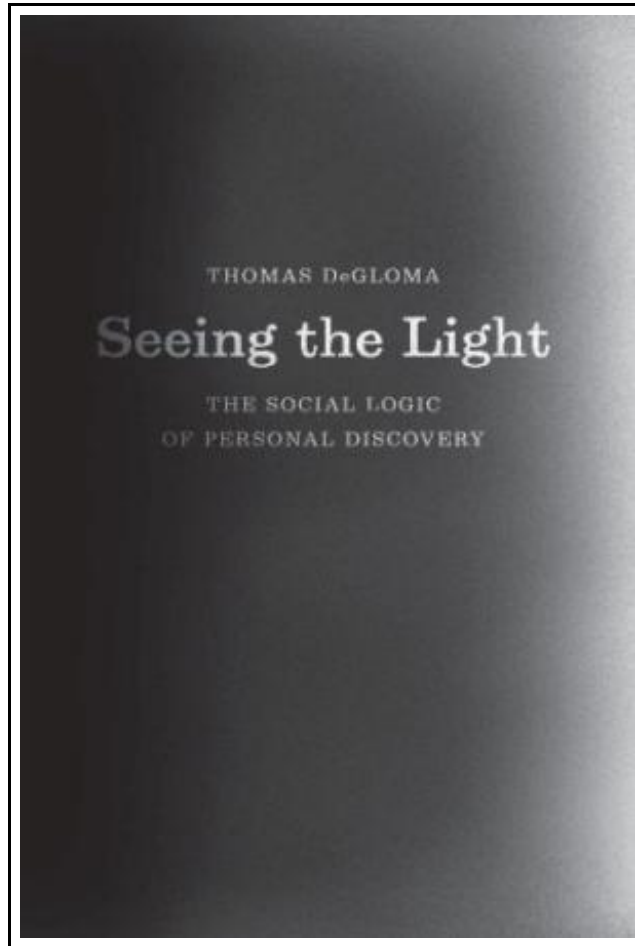


## Seeing the Light: The Social Logic of Personal Discovery



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The University of Chicago Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Seeing the Light: The Social Logic of Personal Discovery, Thomas DeGloma, The chorus of the Christian hymn "Amazing Grace" reads, "I once was lost, but now am found, / Was blind but now I see." Composed by a priest who formerly worked as a slave trader, the song expresses his experience of divine intervention after a perilous trip at sea, one that ultimately caused him to see the error of his ways. This theme of personal awakening is a feature of countless stories throughout history, where "wretches" like the slave owner are saved from darkness and despair by suddenly seeing the light. In *Seeing the Light*, Thomas DeGloma explores such accounts of personal discovery, employing a variety of primary source materials, from newsletters to websites to video documentaries and foundational texts. In stories that range from the discovery of a religious truth to remembering a childhood trauma to coming out of the closet, DeGloma reveals a common social pattern: When people escape a place of darkness by discovering a life-changing truth, they typically ally with a new community. Individuals then use these autobiographical stories to shape their stances on highly controversial issues such as childhood abuse, war and patriotism, political ideology, and religious conversion. Thus, while such stories are seemingly very personal, they also have a distinctly social nature. Tracing a wide variety of narratives through a stunning three thousand years of history, *Seeing the Light* uncovers the common threads of such stories and reveals the crucial, little-recognized social logic of personal discovery.

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