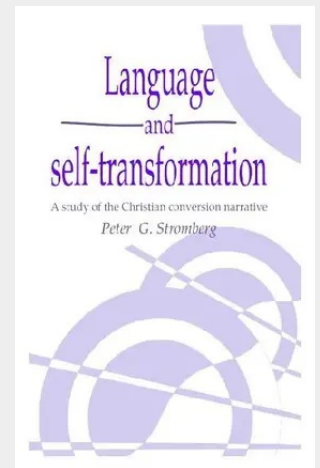


Language and Self-Transformation

A Study of the Christian Conversion Narrative

Social scientists have long been fascinated by the Christian conversion, a form of religious experience that believers say both strengthens their faith and changes their lives. This study looks at the performance of conversion narratives and argues that the performance itself is central to the efficacy of the conversion. Through detailed analysis of a number of conversion narratives, Peter Stromberg shows how these narratives can be understood as a form of ritual, in which believers invoke central emotional conflicts and then attempt to resolve these conflicts by reframing them in terms of the language of Evangelical Christianity. Although the Christian conversion narrative is used as the primary example, the approach in this book also illuminates other practices - such as psychotherapy - in which people deal with emotional conflict through language.

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