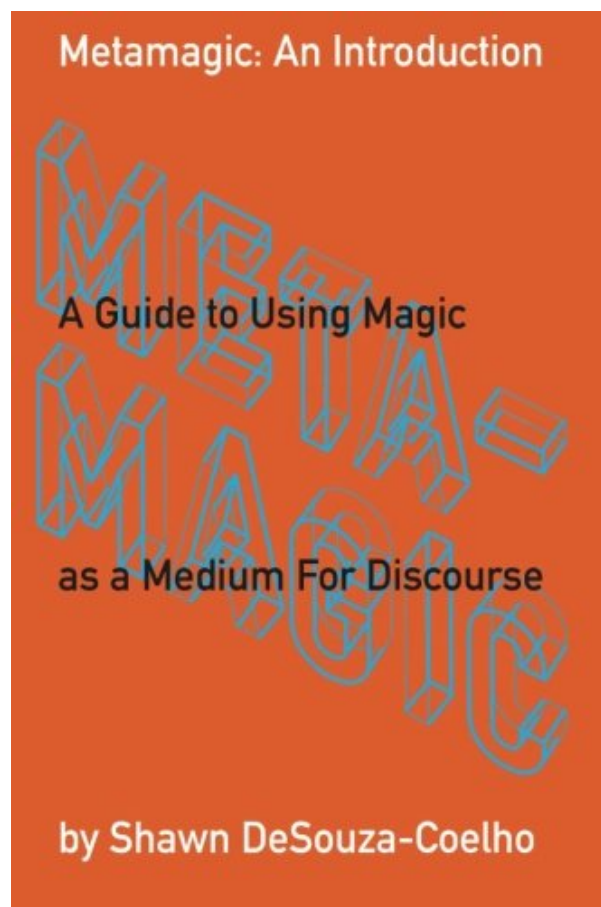


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A Guide to Using Magic

as a Medium For Discourse

by Shawn DeSouza-Coelho

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The art of magic has reached a crisis point. It is without question that the art of magic has failed to achieve the legitimacy and relevance that other art forms possess so easily. Why? Is it because there are so many “bad” magicians out there? If left to the magic community, the answer to this question would be a definitive “Yes!” I’m much more skeptical. If all art is a field where everything that grows does so through the seeds of its artists, then *Metamagic: An Introduction* argues that it is not the magician’s seeds that are tainting the field, but the field tainting the seeds. Calling upon the vibrant work of Eugene Burger and Paul Harris to Slavoj Žižek and Jacques Lacan, this treatise asserts that the fundamental structure through which the art of magic operates is the direct cause of the art form’s degradation and posits that, if magic is to return to its former glory, then its magicians must radically shift the paradigms that constitute their practice.

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- Binding: Paperback
- 180 pages

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Courageous attempt to redefine magic as an art

By Amazon Customer

Shawn does not set himself an easy task in this book. In the beginning pages he warns the user that "this entire book can be construed as an attack on the magic community". Insulting the reader is never a good strategy to sell a book. However, the author recovers by explaining that he does not blame the community, but the practice of magic itself.

The book takes the reader on a journey using semiotics as a guide to unpack magic as a performance art. Shawn uses this method to unearth the poetry underneath the standard Fair/Fair/Fair/Fair/Wow structure in magic performances.

One important question the author does not address is why magic needs to be an art. Magic - like any other creative activity - can fill a wide spectrum, from meaningless entertainment to artful expression of mystery. The book is not clear on why magic as an art should be important. Why should the reader care? The author writes how magic has been relegated from a once respected art form. This statement is questionable at most. Perceptions of art itself change over time. Concepts of magic in the 19th century were not the same as we view them in current days. The status of magic in the cultural landscape over time requires a complex analysis of history.

Metamagic is more than an introduction into the art of magic; it dives straight into the depths of cultural theory and will require a lot from the reader. Shawn needs to be commended for writing a book that goes far outside the beaten path when it comes to the philosophy of magic.

Metamagic is certainly recommended to anyone with a theoretical interest in magic. I hope that there will be a follow-up to this book with practical tips to help magicians put Shawn's vision into place.

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