There’s Something About Mary: Negotiating the Identity of Mary Magdalen in “Ludus Mariae Magdalenae in gaudio”

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Abstract:
Historically, Mary Magdalene is presented as a both sinner and penitent, prophet and a disciple, exemplar of both independence and submission, encompassing the profane and secular, as well as the transcendence of sainthood. The character of Mary Magdalen is rife with dualities. The juxtaposition of these traits is created, communicated, and addressed via musical, linguistic, and structural means in “Ludus Mariae Magdalenae in gaudio,” a fifteenth century Magdalenspiel found in a collection of Passion plays. Though the obvious, traditional message of the Magdalenan conversion emphasizes compliance with the patriarchal standards of the time, in “Ludus Mariae Magdalenae in gaudio” musical and textual tools were used to create the subtle suggestion that the secular, pre-penitential Mary was more accessible, complicating the interpretation of Mary Magdalen in this specific composition.
Using musical, linguistic, and structural means, “Ludus Mariae Magdaleneae in gaudio” communicates the complex meanings of Mary Magdalen in Christian iconography. Historically, Mary has been a figure of temptation and redemption, of submission to the prescribed feminine role versus maintenance of autonomy, and of the conflict between the sacred and the profane. At times she represents the traditional through, for instance, her allegorical depiction of women as inherently, sexually sinful beings. However, a more expansive reading of the female role is accessible. The reading of Mary as a female prophet, for example, provides an untraditional, pro-feminist viewpoint. Even further from the standard perspective is the Gnostic reading of Mary Magdalen’s character as reflective of the “spiritual” side of the church.¹

This paper seeks to explore the conflict inherent in Mary’s character through an examination of Mary Magdalen in the scriptures and history. Furthermore, it will place the character of Mary Magdalen in the “Ludus Mariae Magdaleneae in Gaudio” within this context in order to examine the linguistic, structural, and musical means by which this tension is created, communicated, and negotiated.

Who Is Mary Magdalen?

As a religious and historical figure, Mary Magdalen invites speculation and investigation. Her role, both in the New Testament itself and in the history of the

church at large, is fraught with contradictions and tension reflecting not only
history, but also tradition and teaching. Accounts of Mary Magdalen’s presence and
importance differ throughout the Gospels. In the Gospel of Mark, for instance, Mary
Magdalen is included in the group of three Marys that find the tomb empty on Easter
morning, only to be told by an angel that Jesus has risen. In this account, the women
are struck dumb by this news, unable to spread the word until Mary Magdalen sees
Christ with her own eyes. Mark writes that Jesus “appeared first to Mary
Magdalen...and they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of
her, believed not.” Matthew, however, tells a different story; he recounts that Mary
Magdalen, joined this time by only one other woman described as “the other Mary,”
visits the tomb on Easter morning. As in the Gospel of Mark, Matthew describes
that the women are bidden by an angel to spread the news of the resurrection. In
this version, though, they rush to disseminate this information, and both women see
the risen Christ, who asks them to tell the disciples that He will visit them in Galilee.
Luke’s account is yet more divergent; although a group of women visit the tomb and
are told by two angels of Christ’s resurrection, the Apostles dismiss them,
discounting their tidings as “idle tales,” minimizing the role of women. Thus, Christ
does not show himself first to the women, but instead to two male disciples in this
version. John’s narrative places emphasis on Mary Magdalen’s importance in the
Easter story. According to this version, Mary reports to both Peter and John that the

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2 Mark 16:9-10.
3 Matthew 28:1-10
4 Ibid.
tomb is empty, and she remains faithfully at the site after the two men uncomprehendingly abandon it. While she stands weeping, a man she presumes to be the gardener, but whom she eventually recognizes as Christ, approaches her. As in the other depictions, he charges Mary with spreading the joyous news of his resurrection. In this version, it is Mary who is adherent to her faith, rather than the male disciples. Clearly, accounts of the character of Mary Magdalen in scriptures differ. This provides a foundation for varying interpretations, which reflect the historical circumstances surrounding adoption of Christian canon.

The character of Mary Magdalen becomes even more complex when one considers the implications of her identity. On the most basic level, she is a woman, and thus representative of and complicit in Eve’s original sin. Mary Magdalen magnifies this sin; presented as a beautiful, seductive woman, she typically represents the sins of vanity and lust. One Cistercian writer explains the connection between these sins:

Outward beauty is rarely allied to chastity... a beautiful body and a heart inclined to pleasure breathe forth false sweetness and profane love... in short, the hotness of youth, the desires of the flesh, the weakness of the sex all turn one away from bodily chastity.

However, post-conversion, Mary embodies the sacred—she leads a contemplative life devoted to Christ.

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6 Ibid., 32.
7 Ibid., 146.
Delving more deeply, the multifaceted nature of Mary Magdalen continues to prove problematic. Her name, for instance, is revealing. “Magdalen” refers to her place of origin (the city of Magdala), instead of the more typical manner of identifying women (by their relationship to a male), and presents a challenge to the status quo. This threat is furthered by her actions: in Luke 10:39, she sits at the feet of Jesus, while her sister Martha bustles busily around their home. In taking the typical position of the disciple or student, Mary assumes the role ascribed to men. Her independence is cited as being unbecoming of her gender; without the guidance of a male figure, she is easily led into sin. Furthermore, in the New Testament, Mary was charged by Jesus to bear the tidings of his resurrection to the apostles; she is presented as an example of a female prophet. It should be noted, though, that in Luke’s account of Easter morning, the disciples dismiss Mary’s news as “idle tidings;” in this version the possibility of female preaching is rejected and dismissed, and women’s authority denied. As a character, Mary Magdalen can represent either the sacred or the profane; she is alternatively presented either as a leader/teacher or a follower, and personifies both masculine and feminine traits and behaviors.

The dialectic perplexity of this situation was solidified, augmented, and canonized by Pope Gregory the Great, who, in a sermon given on September 21st of 591, conflated the identities of the multiple Marys described in scripture, thus creating one larger Magdalenian identity. Pope Gregory combined three individual entities: first, the woman representative of the repentant sinner who, as described

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9 Jansen, 21.
10 Ibid., 150.
11 Jansen, 33.
Anya Wilkening  
Undergraduate Research Award Submission  
Abstract and Paper  
by Luke, washes the feet of Jesus with her tears and dries them with her hair\textsuperscript{12};

second, the character known as Mary of Bethany (sister to Martha and Lazaurus);

and finally, the Mary from whom Jesus had banished the seven demons (who then became a loyal disciple).\textsuperscript{13} Though perhaps not based entirely in scripture, Pope Gregory’s assumptions can be explained. Jansen posits that four factors lead to this amalgamation of characters. Textual proximity might lead one to join the anonymous female sinner with the named character of Mary Magdalen. John provides additional scriptural evidence; in his Gospel, the repentant sinner is named as Mary of Bethany. Additionally, the name “Magdalen” was associated with the city of Magdala, which had a sinful, iconoclastic reputation. Finally, Pope Gregory interpreted Mary’s seven demons as incarnations and consequences of the seven deadly sins, providing yet another link to the sinful nature of Mary’s past.\textsuperscript{14} As Jansen describes, Pope Gregory created “a composite saint,” immediately giving Mary Magdalen a full and multifaceted persona.\textsuperscript{15} It is this integrated persona drawn from chosen texts, ignoring other versions of the Mary story (e.g. the Gospel of Mary\textsuperscript{16}) that was used to support a male dominated, female subservient, and celibate church.

Portrayal of Mary in “Ludus Mariae Magdalenae in gaudio”

As the inheritors of this problematic, complex Magdalenian tradition,

Renaissance religious practitioners were forced to navigate the tensions posed by

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(12)] Luke 7:37-50.
\item[(13)] Jansen, 33.
\item[(14)] Jansen, 33-34.
\item[(15)] Ibid.
\item[(16)] Ibid., 26-27.
\end{enumerate}
these numerous diametrically opposed relationships. One example of such
negotiation is found in the German Passion play “Ludus Mariae Magdaleneae in
gaudio.” This example of a Magdalenspiel (a play about Mary Magdalen) is found in
the Erlauer Spiel, which dates from the first half of the fifteenth century. This set of
Passion plays includes five other plays: two Weihnachtsspiele (Christmas plays), an
Osterspiel (Easter play), a Wächterspiel, and a Marienklage. Each play (besides the
Weihnachtsspieles) contains notated music. Though the history surrounding the
compilation is nebulous and tenuous, scholars suggest that the cycle was assembled
in the eastern Alps. The archiepiscopal library in Erlau acquired the original
manuscript of this collection in 1783. 17 The play “Ludus Mariae Magdaleneae in
gaudio” depicts Mary Magdalen’s conversion from sinner to penitent. She is
portrayed first as a vain, prideful woman, intent on seeking pleasure. After flirting,
singing, and interacting with a young man (known only as the Lover), Mary turns to
Jesus and gives up her worldly, sinful ways.18

The play opens with a narrator calling for the attention of the audience.
Interestingly, however, the narrator appeals specifically to “you young and you old
women,” 19 as if to imply that this particular play (with its female protagonist and
association with stereotypically female sin) was of specific importance vis-à-vis
gender. Action begins with Lucifer and six demons, each of whom describe how they
tempt humans into sin. Many of the demons specialize in appealing to the vanity of

17 Peter Loewen and Robin Waugh, eds., Mary Magdalene in Medieval Culture:
18 Wolfgang Suppan, Texte und Melodien der “Erlauer Spiele,” (Tutzing, Germany:
Verleggt Bei Hans Schnieder, 1990), 122-151
19 Ibid., 122.
women; Nottier, for example, utilizes cosmetics to lure women away from the path of righteousness. Already, the stage is set for the archetypical treatment of Mary Magdalen as a vain, willful woman, saved only through conversion.20

The commentary on the worldly, profane nature of Mary Magdalen’s existence begins at once, with her first song, a rendition of “Mundi Delectacio,” followed by a German interpretation of and elaboration on the lyrics. As if the words did not make her meaning clear enough (she describes her love for pleasure, and praises her own beauty), the song genre (goliardic) adds to this perception. Goliardic songs have a tradition of impropriety; described as “frankly secular,” songs of “love, drinking, feasting, gambling, and miscellaneous drolleries” abound.21 “Mundi Delectacio”, like other goliardic songs, is written using the typical thirteen-syllable trochaic verse pattern. The German version that follows continues in this same vein, using goliardic meter despite the switch to the vernacular. The link between the Latin and German songs is made more explicit and emphatic by the overall form created by the music shared by the two parts; arguably, the final two lines of German song are closely related to the goliardic song, as they begin and end with similar musical cells, and have roughly the same contour (figure 1).

Figure 1
Erlauer Spiel, pages 130-131

20 Jansen, 156.
The musical continuity between the two songs is remarkable for numerous reasons. In its use of goliardic meter, it references ribald songs of the past. It allows Mary to express herself in Latin, but also to explain and elaborate to the audience in the familiar, vernacular tongue. It can be understood using traditional musical analysis,
but does not adhere strictly to regulations, giving Mary expressive opportunities and capabilities more compatible with the view of Mary as an autonomous, expressive individual.

Almost immediately following, Mary sings another song, known as her *Mantellied.* The lyrics emphasize Mary’s corporal desires, hinting at past sexual encounters, and asserting her own autonomy:

> Because I left my cloak in the meadow, my mistress began to inquire where I had been
> How droll this was, I thought to myself. What does she want from me? Shall I not have control over my body?

She directly challenges accepted norms and expectations through her behavior and her speech: she draws attention to her own physicality, and asserts that she alone has the power to use it in the pursuit of pleasure. She is encouraged by the devil, who inserts himself into her song, thus musically binding the two characters, both sinful in nature (figure 2).

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23 Ibid.
25 Ibid., 191.
Figure 2
*Erlauer Spiel*, pages 132-134

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*Maria:*

A

Et cantat:

Ja lieb ich meinen man-del in der au-e,

do we-gund mich fro-gen meinen frau-e,

B

wo ich ge-we-len wü-re;

des däucht ich mich so spü-he:

was wil si mein, was wil si mein,

soi ich meinen lei-bes nicht ge-wal-tig sein?

*Diaboli:*

A

prosequentem cantando:

Jo du, jo du, jo du lie-bes fräi-e-lein,

du solt dei-nes lei-bes wol ge-wal-tig sein.
This dance song utilizes varied strophic form, and resembles an arrangement hearkening back to the Middle Ages. Here both Mary’s stanzas and the Devil’s refrains use similar, G-mode music—thus tying it to familiar, profane popular music. The song can also be understood in terms of its references to the Meistergesang tradition, with the first stanza analyzed an AAB form (figure 3). The A lines (Stollen, indicated in red) all conform to the same general melody, while the B melody (Abegesang, marked in blue) introduces a new theme.

Figure 3
Erlauer Spiel, page 132

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26 Ibid., 190.
27 Ibid., 193.
These elements firmly establish Mary as part of the secular world, and appeal to the understanding of the contemporary fifteenth century audience through a musical idiom that represents Mary’s more corporeal nature.\(^\text{28}\)

In the next scene, the Lover enters, singing in Latin, the sacred language of the church, “Veni in ortum meum, soror mea sponsa”\(^\text{29}\)—a text borrowed from the Song of Songs. This is telling for numerous reasons; the Song of Songs differs from other biblical counterparts in that it is love poetry. The Lover, here appropriates it and sets it in a secular context. Text from the Song of Songs is also featured liberally in the Office of Mary Magdalene. “Veni in ortum meum,” sung by the lover, appears in the Epistle for the mass in the Feast of Mary Magdalene.\(^\text{30}\) The Lover, though seeking Mary for sexual means, uses sacred text, and is musically linked not only to

\(^{28}\) Ibid., 191
\(^{29}\) Ibid., 192
\(^{30}\) Ibid.
the church and the sacred, but to the sainthood of Mary Magdalen—a state which Mary does not reach until post-conversion. Ironically, he uses religious text and song associated with her status as a saint to tempt her away from the path of righteousness.

At this point in the drama, the Lover and Mary Magdalen finally meet. A flirtatious dialogue ensues; the Lover offers Mary goods representing female vanity (coats, shoes, dress, etc.), while she teases him. He describes how her red mouth makes him “burn with passion,” to which she suggests that if he is burning, he should “put himself out.”

This ribald interaction, typical of Renaissance word play (e.g. the double entendres of Shakespeare) would have been interpreted by the audience as placing Mary firmly in the world of the common man. Interestingly, Mary responds to one of the Lover’s advances by again singing the *Mantellied*, highlighting her desire to remain an independent woman. Their conversation is rife with sexual innuendo, underscoring Mary’s portrayal as a “loose” woman; though she’s happy to trade racy witticisms, she shows no desire to submit to his authority permanently. This complex amalgamation of the sacred (in its use of the language and song of the Church) and the profane content integrates the two aspects of Mary’s historical and religious meaning.

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31 Suppan, 137, translated by Peter Loewen. Original text reads:

Lesche, herr, lesche
Disen man also vreche!
Er ist zornig und ungemuet,
Erprinnt recht als ein gluet.
Wolt ier mier das gelauben,
Ier sölt füer den zorn essen strauben
The situation is complicated by the arrival of Martha, who, like the Lover, enters chanting a text from the Song of Songs: “Revertere, revertere,” which appears in the Office of Matins for the Feast of Mary Magdalen. With its associated liturgical meaning, it once again reminds the listener of Mary’s approaching elevation to sainthood. Additionally, both musically and literally this chant represents conversion; Martha has “converted” the love poetry used by the Lover back to its sacred roots. The true tension escalates; both the Lover and Martha use sacred love poetry, communicated through chants from Mary Magdalen’s own Office in a bid for her soul. In combining the sacred with the profane, a dialectic of more sensual and religious forms is created. Martha, furthermore, urges Mary to “convert from your sins and follow our Lord Jesus Christ, who has authority over the whole world!” Martha thus implies that by converting, Mary will cede her cherished autonomy, submitting instead to the authority of Jesus Christ, a male figure. Mary remains unswayed, asserting her right to sing, dance, and do what she wishes.

A song between the Lover and Mary follows, during which he woos her using courtly, profane imagery, and she, once again, provocatively teases him. Though highly varied, the essential form is strophic bar form (AAB), once again hearkening

32 Ibid. 137.
33 Loewen, 192.
34 Ibid.
35 Suppan, 138, translated by Peter Loewen. Original text reads:
   Maria, liebe swester mein,
   Wecher dich von den sudden dein
   Und cher zu unserm herren Jhesu Christ,
   Der aller werlt gewaltig ist!
back to the style of the *minnesingers*. Here, the *Stollen* (marked in red, figure 4) all present variations of the same melody. Aligning with tradition, the *Abegesang* (marked in blue, figure 4) uses new, different music. The standard form is varied further by the insertion of extra iterations of the *Abegesang*, which provides additional room for the two characters to converse. Yet again, Mary engages in a secular, popular style to express herself, using the more common style to emphasize Mary’s essentially human nature, highlighting the tension between multiple versions of Mary Magdelen.  

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36 Loewen, 193.
37 Ibid.
Figure 3
Erlauer Spiel, pages 140-147

Tunc Maria cantat cum diabolo ut infra. / Versus primus:

MARIA:

Wis wil-le-chum ain sum-mer-zeit,

di haid in chek-cher var-be leit,

der win-der sei ver-wa-ßen!

Secundus:

MARIA:

Plüm-lein und der griene chle,

den siecht man heur a-ber als ee,

das sich mein leib

in frai-den auf swin-get.
Anya Wilkening  
Undergraduate Research Award Submission  
Abstract and Paper
ser in den tod,
so ver-leus ich mein sin-ne.

Maria:

Was ist di not,
di du lei-dst? das das das si ver-prin-ne!

Procus:

Frau, das la dier we-sen laid
duerch al-ler frau-en wier-di-chalt.
und siech, wie ich prin-ne!

Maria:

So nim ein wa-ßer und le-sche dich,
Anya Wilkening
Undergraduate Research Award Submission
Abstract and Paper

PROCUS:

Maria:

PROCUS:

Das duenkicht das allerpeste mich

in allen meinen sinnen.

Nain frau, du pist

de di mich le schet al lai ne.

Nune gib mir frist,
unz ich mich sein pas wol wol wol ver al ne.

Freilein, wann chumpt der tag

das mich dein trost gehelen mag.
Anya Wilkening
Undergraduate Research Award Submission
Abstract and Paper

Maria cantat?

Als mein an von chier chen chumpt,
so mag der fräid wol werden chund
und hoches gemüte.

Proclus:

Wie ob' si dann
ze lange beli bet?

Magdalena:

Nain si chumt schier,
als man rot rot rot rosen siecht sneiben.
PROCUS:

A

Das waists wol, das mier wege schiecht,

es wiert mier ze lange.

MARIA:

A

Welt ier mier nicht gergen dar,

ier seit aengenge.

PROCUS:

B

Frau, ich wil sein,

als dein giet mier enpetet.
MAGDALENA:

MARIA:

PROCUS:

MARIA:
After all the sexual and spiritual tension, the conversion of Mary Magdalen occurs suddenly and quickly. Within mere moments, Mary changes her position of refusal ("I am a lovely woman, I want to praise my body...What I don't repent today, I can repent in a year's time")\textsuperscript{38} to one of acceptance ("I am going to turn to Jesus,}

\textsuperscript{38} Suppan, 148, translated by Peter Loewen.
She casts off and destroys her crown, symbolic of her pledge to rid herself of the sin of vanity, and promises to follow Martha to Jesus and "kiss his pure feet." The characters involved in the conversion (Mary and Jesus) rely predominantly on chants sourced from the chants of Mary’s own Office to portray her repentance and newfound status as a penitent. Mary sings, “Peccavi super numerum arene maris...” (figure 4), “Accessit ad pedes” (figure 5), and finally, “Ihesu nostra redempcio.” Jesus chants “dimissa sunt ei peccata multa...” (figure 6). These chants can be found in Graz 29 and 30, two volumes of a fourteenth century antiphoner from an abbey in Stiermark, Austria, not far from the original purported source of the play.

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39 Ibid., 150, translated by Peter Loewen.
40 Ibid., original text reads:
   Martha, liebe swester mein,
   Ich volg gern der lere dein
   Füer michm da ich Ihesum wegréüe
   Und chüß iem sein zart füeße
   Und wewain mein angst und mein not:
   Der häilig geist mier es enpot.
41 Loewen, 195.
42 Suppan, 151.
Mary’s use of traditional chant musically ties her to the religious piety she has just embraced, serving as a reminder of her future elevation to sainthood. Musically, Mary has reached a state of apotheosis. These chants thus symbolize Mary’s acceptance of church authority, and because of this, an accompanying loss of freedom and acknowledgment of a more traditional female stance. Findlay explains

44 Ibid.
this feminist re-reading, suggesting, “Femininity, as represented by Eve, symbolizes openness to experience and growth, whereas paternal law is prohibition and confinement.” With this concept in mind, a gendered reading of “Ludus Mariae Magdalenae in gaudio” exposes the power struggle that is inherent in the Magdalenian identity: domination, represented by the use of more traditional genre, chant, versus freedom, symbolized by the striking variation that is prolific in her secular songs.

The change of style in the music associated with the character of Mary Magdalen in the “Ludus Mariae Magdalenae in gaudio” suggests transformation: from vernacular German and popular genres to sacred Latin chant. The songs she sings pre-conversion imply evolution within themselves; the musical variation that is present throughout can be seen as development. Though her sins are forgiven once she converts, forgiveness comes at the expense of musical confinement. Singing chant she becomes musically constricted, restricted to Latin religious chants. The use of chant as a means of expression limits Mary; the variation seen in her vernacular song represents maturation, divested as conversion is accepted.

The drama presents mixed messages through the use of different languages. Just as the use of familiar song forms can be viewed as an attempt to appeal to the audience, the use of the vernacular (German) is intended to increase their empathy for her. Lucie Vrinzen considers this concept, suggesting:

The content of the spiritual drama is constructed so that the emotions to which the dramatic figures succumb are transferred from the

observer because they more or less participate in the fate of the character.\textsuperscript{46}

Once converted, Mary communicates almost exclusively in Latin, the language of the church, the sacred and the learned. Unlike in Mary’s first song (figure 1), these chants are not followed by vernacular renditions. Though she explains her conversion in German, she no longer communicates through song, which previously constituted the bulk of her self-expression. These chants represent her newly found religious identity, but effectively shut out the audience and deny Mary’s autonomy. After achieving spiritual apotheosis, Mary is separated; though the audience may admire her, they no longer can identify with her; quite literally she no longer speaks their language.

A similar argument can be made for the unbalanced ratio of time spent glorifying her worldly life versus time spent praising her conversion. After denying the authority of Christ for the greater part of the drama, her rapid conversion hardly seems convincing. If the content is indeed constructed in such a way that audience identifies with the characters, “Ludus Mariae Magdalenae in gaudio” inundates the viewers with the delights of sin while glossing over the goodness and rewards of piety.

It is the balance of how the story is presented, in the context of accessibility of the text and music, which suggests that “Ludus Mariae Magdalenae in guadio” does not completely embrace the traditional view of Mary Magdalen, as codified by Pope Gregory. Early in the song cycle Mary’s sensuality is celebrated. She is an

\textsuperscript{46} Quoted by Peter Loewen and Robin Waugh, eds., \textit{Mary Magdalene in Medieval Culture: Conflicted Roles}, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014), 191.
accessible, seductive character to both the Lover, and to the audience. She uses the language of the audience to communicate, and musical genres that would have been both familiar and popular. She is not a follower, she is a leader, maybe one who could have contributed to and directed the development of Christian belief. With conversion, Mary becomes less accessible and understandable to the audience. She speaks the language of the church, which could not be understood nor spoken by the audience. She uses musical forms associated with the church and prayer. Though her conversion may be admired and suitable, there is the suggestion that this transcendent Mary is not a woman who can lead others because she is no longer a prophet, confident in her ability to generate enthusiasm.

As a character, Mary Magdalen is inherently problematic. Her very nature represents duality; she challenges, acknowledges, and finally accepts societal norms, represents both sin and sainthood, and epitomizes both the physical and spiritual world. There is lack of clarity in Mary’s role. Is she the teacher, a preferred messenger of Christ, the sinful woman who embraces the sensual, or the subservient but redeemed sinner? The religious drama “Ludus Mariae Magdalenae in gaudio” contains a suitably complex and nuanced treatment of Mary Magdalen; though the familiar axiom of redemption through conversion and repentance is clear, the building blocks (language, song, and structure) complicate the overarching message. The use of vernacular (German) versus sacred (Latin) language, the music sung by the characters (which juxtaposes musical canonization with her musical freedom), and the overall organization of “Mary Magdalenae in gaudio” serve as means to explore her symbolism as a religious figure, revealing the complexity of the
Thoughtful analysis of “Ludus Mariae Magdalenae in gaudio” indicates the ambivalence and tension depicted in this presentation of Mary Magdalen, conflict that is consistent and congruent with many other depictions of Mary Magdalen’s role in Christian symbolism and belief. Thus, “Ludus Mariae Magdalenae in gaudio” navigates the dualities of Mary Magdalen’s identity and represents the ensuing tension via musical, linguistic, and structural means. Her role as a female within the male church is explored, and though the traditional interpretation of Mary prevails, careful reading suggests an awareness of the appeal of a female who is not entirely subservient.
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