

Reflections on *The Mary Magdalene Tradition: Witness and Counterwitness in Early Christian Communities* [Liturgical Press, 2004] and Performance Criticism
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The study calls attention to the complexity of the performance context:

- It is not sufficient to be attentive to the story's narrative.
- It is necessary to offer analysis of storyteller, story, and audience in relation to a particular context.
- Storytelling events are acts of persuasion, and often engage contested ground.

The Storyteller

- The status of the storyteller in relation to the community will have an impact on how the story is heard.
 - It is important to identify who is telling the story.
- The storyteller has a range of choices to make in telling the story.
 - This is driven in part by the storyteller's response to context and audience.
- The storyteller exerts agency in telling the story.

The Story:

- What is the status of the story within the community? How is it perceived?
- The story's narrative is stable, but not fixed.
 - What elements are stable? What is not fixed?
 - Is it important that the audience has heard the story before so that they will be aware of differences?
- The story belongs to a genre that gives rise to expectations within the audience.
 - This signals that even the choice of kind of text is made in response to audience.

The Audience

- Audiences come together within a particular context.
- The audience has a relationship to the storyteller and the story, which gives rise to expectations and anticipated responses.
- Audiences have agency, as a group and as individuals within the group.
- The response of the audience to the story is an integral part of the event.

Questions:

- 1) Is a performance of a story the same as storytelling?**
- 2) Is memorization of a story that is repeated word for word without variation storytelling?**
- 3) How is analysis of an aural story the same or different from analysis of a written story?**