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Performing *Le jeu d'Adam*: Teaching Medieval French Literature through Project-Based Learning

by Nancy Virtue

THIS ARTICLE FOCUSES on a project-based activity I designed in an advanced French medieval literature class at Indiana University Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW), the production of a live performance of the medieval mystery play, *Le jeu d'Adam* (1140–74). I describe unique features of the project, and explain how those features address the principal goals of Project-Based Learning (PBL). I also present the implications of such a project for meeting the “five C’s” of ACTFL’s Standards for Foreign Language Learning, and for strengthening enrollments in university French programs. I argue that there is still great value and relevance in teaching traditional content such as medieval French literature, even in a rapidly changing global, academic, and curricular landscape.

In its most recent update on the status of enrollments in foreign language classes at universities in the United States, the MLA reported that although French enrollments were on the rise overall, enrollments relative to other foreign languages declined by 22% between 1998 and 2006 (*Enrollments*). According to Steven Straight, “world language demographics and increased global awareness have shifted college-level language enrollments heavily away from the previous near-monopoly of the Big Three of previous generations (French, German, Spanish).” Straight points out that this shift in student demand will likely result in a dramatic reallocation of resources.

In light of these enrollment shifts, faculty in traditionally taught languages, particularly French and German, are feeling the pressure to make significant and often dramatic curricular and co-curricular changes designed to respond to perceived student needs and to make the value and relevance of their language and discipline more evident to students, colleagues, and administrators. In an effort to sustain enrollments and to retain majors and minors, many French and German programs have

reduced the traditional emphasis on literature at the advanced level to include a wider range of courses focusing on content deemed more practical or appealing to today's students, such as business and/or special-purpose language, translation, and contemporary culture courses. In addition, many language programs have eliminated courses focused on specific time periods in favor of courses with a thematic or generic focus.

These types of changes are a necessary and appropriate response to a changing global and academic context. Indeed, in its 2007 report, the MLA recommended against the two-tiered structure in university language departments—"in which a two- or three-year language sequence feeds into a set of core courses primarily focused on canonical literature" (*Foreign 2*)—in favor of programs that incorporate a broader range of curricular offerings, as well as more interdisciplinary and collaborative courses.

However, I argue that there are ways in which even courses with the most traditional literary content, such as a medieval French literature class, can be transformed to draw from both canonical sources and the latest approaches, methods, and multimedia-enhanced instruction. A stronger case can be made for retaining courses focused on canonical literary content if those courses incorporate newer pedagogical approaches, are interdisciplinary, are more attentive to breaking down the two-tiered separation between language and literature, and allow for articulation between the lower- and upper-level divisions of language instruction. If they are approached creatively and innovatively, these transformed courses can help sustain small language programs and meet many of the needs detailed in the MLA report and the five goals of the ACTFL Standards.

Description of the Course and Project

In the fall semester of 2006, eight advanced French students engaged in a performance PBL activity in my Medieval French Literature course at IPFW. The first half of the semester was conducted in a relatively conventional way; students were assigned several French medieval texts and were asked to reflect on those texts through class discussions, analytical papers, and an exam. The remainder of the class (from the midterm on), was devoted to producing a dramatic performance of the *Jeu d'Adam*, an anonymous twelfth-century play that retells the Creation, Temptation, and Fall of Adam and Eve.¹ The play was attended by IPFW students and faculty and by French students from area high schools and middle schools. The production, which included several multimedia components, was recorded to DVD.

Before work began on the production, students were asked to do research about various aspects of the play (historical context, original staging, performance, gender and power roles, etc.). They read scholarly articles (Appendix A), were asked to summarize the main points of each one and

to explain how the ideas expressed might influence their own production decisions. They also met regularly during class time and outside of class to make decisions about the production and to rehearse their roles.

The play consisted of three short acts and lasted approximately one hour. It was performed in modern French from a text adapted (slightly) by the students, all of whom were given a role to play, including Adam, Eve, Satan, God, Narrator, and three devil-angels. Everyone had a speaking role, though certainly some roles involved more memorization than others. Those with fewer lines to memorize were asked to participate more actively in other aspects of the production, which they were happy to do.

Once the play had been performed, students were asked to view the DVD of the production, to write an analysis of their experience performing the play, and to reflect upon and synthesize what they had learned from producing their own play. Students were evaluated on the analysis and application of their research, the quality of their participation in the project (including memorization of roles, preparation of publicity materials, costumes, etc.), and the quality of their analysis and reflection on the project.

Rationale for the Project: Advantages of PBL and Text Performance for Advanced Foreign Language Classes

A Student-Centered Approach

Nicole Mills describes PBL as “a student-centered approach to learning in which students collaborate on sequential authentic tasks and develop a final product” (607). Although there exists relatively little empirical research on PBL as it relates to language instruction (Beckett and Miller), its proponents cite a number of benefits to the approach: “Project-based learning has earned the endorsement of many L2 and FL practitioners, largely because of its reported positive effects on students’ motivation, language skills, ability to function in groups, content learning, self-confidence, autonomy, and decision-making abilities” (Stoller 34). Paul Chamness Miller argues that PBL has great potential in helping instructors meet the “five C’s” of ACTFL’s Standards:

[P]roject-based instruction can help language teachers achieve important instructional goals such as promoting communication, integrating the study of culture with language, making connections between language and content, making comparisons between the students’ first and second languages, and establishing communities both inside and outside the school walls. (237)

In Stoller’s words, “Project-based learning should have a process and product orientation” and it should “be defined, at least in part, by students, to encourage ownership in the project” (24). According to Fried-Booth, this

means that students should actively participate in defining the nature of the project: "The route to the end-product brings opportunities for students to develop their confidence and independence and to work together in a real-world environment by collaborating on a task which they have defined for themselves and which has not been externally imposed" (6–7).

One of the principal benefits of the *Jeu d'Adam* project is that it allowed students a high level of ownership in the project as well as a different role in their learning than they would otherwise have had. Although students did not choose the text to be performed—this would not have been practical given their lack of previous knowledge in medieval theater—they participated in decisions regarding all aspects of the production, including set design, costumes, the distribution and interpretation of roles, content and appearance of publicity materials, and choice of musical and multimedia elements. This level of involvement in decision-making narrowed the gap between teaching and learning, making students and instructor co-facilitators in learning.²

Text Performance

Additionally, and more specifically, I chose the performance of *Le jeu d'Adam* as my course project because of the significant linguistic, literary, and analytical benefits afforded by text performance in advanced foreign language classes. There is a well-established body of scholarship on the positive effects of theater performance in the foreign language classroom at all levels.³ Ryan-Scheutz and Colangelo provide an excellent review of this scholarship and make a strong case for the benefits of theatrical productions at advanced-level language learning. One of the most important benefits they cite is the potential of theatrical performance to improve proficiency: "While full-scale foreign language theater production promotes all five Cs [...] its greatest potential for proficiency building concerns the numerous communicative functions that theater production necessitates" (375). Francesca Savoia speaks of the "great divide" that has often existed between lower-level and upper-level foreign language classes: "the former, traditionally designed to teach basic skills, too often lacked in content; the latter, much more rich in content, too often disregarded the students; continuing language learning problems. Fortunately, in the past twenty years or so, much has occurred to facilitate the bridging of this gap" (509). She too argues that text performance "can break down the psycholinguistic barriers to advance language acquisition and cultural knowledge, and the study of literature appears, in the process, tangibly useful" (512). In addition to promoting students' communicative skills and language proficiency, text performance facilitates literary analysis. It can help bring literature alive for students, making it more accessible and relevant. Rocklin describes text performance as:

[A] pedagogy that employs many of the concepts and practices that have been forged by those studying the plays as literature *and* many of the concepts and practices deployed by those examining and producing the plays as theater [...] an interlocking array of approaches, no one of which is exhaustive, but which, taken together, enable us to arrive at a more comprehensive knowledge of the play as text and performance. (69–70)

In other words, teaching theater through performance allows students to understand and experience a literary text more fully, and to approach it not just analytically, but creatively and collaboratively as well. It gives students of literature “the knowledge that muscle and blood can still be given to the dry bones of our medieval past” (Walsh 138).

Advocacy of French and Program-Building

Finally, I chose this project for its potential in building connections between students of all levels, at IPFW and in area high schools. IPFW’s French program has a holistic approach; we think it is important not just to teach well-conceived and stimulating classes, but also to provide cultural and linguistic opportunities for our students outside the classroom. We do this through French conversation tables, film series, poetry recitation contests, community-oriented activities, etc. This project contributed to our goal of providing co-curricular support to our classroom instruction. Although only eight advanced students participated in the production, the project benefited more students than those who were directly involved, since live theater creates a sense of excitement and community. With *Le jeu d’Adam*, beginning and intermediate students from IPFW and from area high schools not only were exposed to a canonical play performed in French, but also were able to witness the creative success of advanced students and to observe how much fun they were having performing. Such events are crucial to building and sustaining a strong program, by creating connections and community among all levels of students (beginning and advanced, university and secondary) and reinforcing the cultural and linguistic learning experienced in the classroom: “Departmental success often relies on maintaining a tiered program, for example, levels such as academic offerings, academic plus cocurricular offerings, and curricular offerings. In addition, it is important that the tiers be viewed not as separate but, rather, as intrinsic to one another” (DiDonato 13).

Unique Features and Pedagogical Benefits of the Project

Development of Students’ Research Skills

According to Stoller, another key component of PBL involves the enhancement of students’ research skills, by requiring “students to take

some responsibility for their own learning through the gathering, processing, and reporting of information from target language resources" (24). Moreover, according to Potter, theatrical performance projects are ideally suited to the development of research skills:

When accompanied by a rigorous reinvestigation of the staging requirements and potentialities of the scripts, these productions can be acts of research in the best sense of the term. In this process, not merely the original text and stage directions but also the attempts of critics, scholars, and editors to clarify or to interpret medieval plays become crucial resources for actors and directors in staging the plays effectively. (130)

The research component of this project proved to be beneficial both in a scholarly sense—students were required to identify, read, and summarize academic articles about a canonical text—but also in a creative sense because students applied what they had learned in that research to decisions regarding the production, such as the position of Heaven and Hell on stage, the blocking of characters, the use of certain costumes, and the representation of some of the characters. What proved to be most interesting were the ways the students decided to alter the original staging. They felt strongly, for example, that their production should remain relatively faithful to the original text but that it also should question certain ideas put forth by the text. For example, they chose to have a female student play the role of God, which would have been unthinkable to a medieval audience. They also opted to sexualize to some degree the relationship between Satan and Eve, a choice that is not necessarily emphasized in the actual text. These choices were not made unreflectively, but were informed by their research, and vigorously discussed and debated in class and during rehearsals. Student essays written after the production suggest a heightened awareness of the text's implications and nuances of meaning. As one student commented:

Dieu était une femme dans notre production, un mot d'esprit (un tour?) parfait. Dans le texte, Dieu s'appelle "La Figure", pas "Dieu". Mais, La Figure est un homme évidemment dans le texte (il porte les robes ecclésiastiques, et il est un symbole d'autorité donc un homme traditionnellement). Parce que nous avons eu une femme pour La Figure, nous avons sapé la compréhension traditionnelle qu'Eve, et donc toutes les femmes, sont mauvaises. Et bien sûr, Dieu comme femme sape l'autorité de l'homme.⁴

Development of Students' Linguistic Skills through Culture

According to Stoller, PBL should make "a dual commitment to language and content learning" (24) and should give students "the opportunity to engage in deliberate practice of the skills and language required for the

successful completion of each stage of the project" (35). Fukushima states that self-directed performance has potential linguistic benefits to the student, which more traditional, content-based approaches sometimes lack: "Learners' self-directed performance should maximize the meaningfulness—and possibly the practical value—of the content. At the same time, knowing that their product will be presented to the public should elicit their best possible L2 performance" (351).

The *Jeu d'Adam* activity required students to practice their French in and outside the classroom during the various discussions and negotiations that took place about production. Students had to memorize lines and work on their French pronunciation. Some of them were taking a French phonetics course concurrently with the project and were able to work on their lines for the play within that class. All students with major speaking lines met with a native speaker to work on their pronunciation. In his/her reflective analysis, at least one student (Appendix B, Student 7) commented on the usefulness of having to memorize text in the target language.

In addition to those students directly involved in the *Jeu d'Adam* project, the production was also beneficial to lower-level students who attended the play. Since most students are familiar with the story of Adam and Eve, even beginners were able to follow the basic plot and, therefore, potentially better understand the dialogue and recognize familiar vocabulary.

Development of Students' Critical Thinking Skills

Stoller states that "proponents of project-based learning often mention the content learning, problem-solving abilities, and critical-thinking skills that result from student involvement in projects" (2006, 31). The *Jeu d'Adam* project gave students the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills by requiring them to engage creatively, and in a sustained way, with a literary text. The production of a theatrical text requires constant decisions in interpretation. This is perhaps particularly true when dealing with a medieval text, for which the original stage directions are scarce and often vague.

Practitioners of a performance-based approach to teaching theater cite the development of interpretive skills as one of main strengths of this approach: "We have a text of the play. But it is only an outline, a supplement. In the absence of stage directions or other authority, we fall back on the slippery meaning of the play as the authority for our performance, and where the text is silent, we must still decide" (Vaughan 148). And, Rocklin points out, the performance model in teaching theater is valuable because it "introduces the difficult but vital questions about whether an interpretation seems valid and whether a valid interpretation is always producible" (75).

In the case of *Le jeu d'Adam*, decisions on how to represent God, Eve, etc. led to fruitful discussions about gender issues, but also theatrical production in general. As several students suggest in their essays, the project helped them to better understand the value of the play and to consider the gap between what is a "medieval" versus a "modern" perspective in a developed and meaningful way. In the words of one student:

C'est quand nous avons eu l'opportunité d'explorer les relations entre les personnages que (nous avons) commencé à devenir plus confiants et moins nerveux. Jusque-là nous avons beaucoup discuté la mise en scène—les costumes, la possibilité d'ajouter de la musique et de la danse, de la vidéo, etc. Bien sûr que ces éléments sont très importants [...] mais en travaillant avec les paroles du texte, les étudiants ont commencé à comprendre les motivations des personnages et plus tard à mettre en pratique leurs actions [...] On a découvert qu'Adam n'était pas stupide ou passif, qu'Ève était aussi compliquée qu'Adam, et que Satan pouvait devenir contrarié et fâché.

Natural Integration of Student Skills, Talents, and Interests

According to Stoller, project-based learning should "encourage the natural integration of skills" (24) and "capitalize on the strengths of group members" (34). Fried-Booth points out that the integration of students' various talents is particularly advantageous when there are varying linguistic abilities among students:

Project work [...] draws together students of mixed ability and creates opportunities for individuals to contribute in ways which reflect their different talents and creativity. The less linguistically-gifted student may be a talented artist, able to create brilliant artwork, thus gaining self-esteem, which would be unlikely in a more conventional language lesson. The collaborative process, relying as it does on the involvement and commitment of the individual students, is the strength of a project. (6–7)

Indeed, the production of *Le jeu d'Adam* allowed students to utilize a wide range of artistic talents and skills (dramatic, musical, graphic, technological, etc). The students playing Adam and Eve performed two musical pieces during the play (Eve sang songs in Latin and Old French, Adam accompanied her on the clarinet). Those students who felt less comfortable taking on large speaking roles in the play, either for linguistic or acting reasons, were involved in other aspects of the production. For example, students choreographed and performed two dance numbers, scripted and designed a visually appealing play program, and contributed to the design of the play's set and choice of costumes. This level of skills integration would have been difficult, if not impossible, in a more conventional, classroom approach to the play.

Collaborative and Interdisciplinary Benefits

“Project-based learning should oblige students to work in groups and on their own” (Stoller 24). The production of *Le jeu d'Adam* provided constant opportunities for collaboration, not only among the French students and instructor, but also between French students and students and faculty in the Theater Department, who were also involved in aspects of the play. French students worked collaboratively with students from the Department of Theater to design the set and received input from an advanced theater student on acting, blocking, and other theatrical rudiments.⁵ This collaboration was also inherently interdisciplinary. Although interdisciplinarity is not a condition widely considered essential to PBL, it is one of the advantages of text performance cited by Rocklin:

Using the term *performing texts* also emphasizes that the double existence of drama is irreducible. For at the same time that we have turned away from reading [...] plays as if they were identical with novels or poems, and turned toward recognizing them as being written by someone who conceived of them as ‘primarily a theatrical art,’ we have nonetheless also recognized that it can be reductive to treat plays only as theater. (69)

In other words, a performance approach to teaching *Le jeu d'Adam* also helped students to better understand the interconnection between performing arts and literary texts.

Student Motivation and Self-Confidence

“Many language professionals have pointed out that project-based learning has resulted in increased student motivation, in addition to common outcomes of motivation, including increased student autonomy, enhanced self-confidence and self-concept, and increased interest” (Stoller 28). The performance of *Le jeu d'Adam* proved to be empowering to students who initially expressed anxiety about performing in French before a live audience, but who ended up enjoying themselves and being proud of the work they had done. Student comments reflected this sense of acquired self-confidence. For example: “L’expérience de ce changement de personnage en moi-même m’a bien plu, et je voudrais continuer de développer comme acteur. Beaucoup de monde m’a encouragé à le faire, et maintenant que j’en ai fait j’ai envie d’en refaire.”

Upper-level literature courses in small language programs are often taught to a small number of students who may or may not be interested in the course content, and who otherwise would never have chosen the course, but who take it because they are few or no other options in their major. Again, projects like this one not only help build excitement and

enthusiasm around what might otherwise be dismissed as dry or irrelevant. They also help connect the work that is done at the advanced levels with students at lower levels. In the IPFW French program, we have found that providing opportunities to bring these two populations together can be mutually beneficial. Advanced students are able to practice and showcase their various abilities (linguistic and creative), and beginning and intermediate students have contact with more proficient students in a context that is entertaining and unthreatening.

The Creation of a (Multimedia) "Final Product"

"Project-based learning should result in a tangible final product" (Stoller 24). One might say that there were several tangible final products to the *Jeu d'Adam* project. The performance of the play in front of a live audience was clearly the most important final product, but it is important to add that the performance itself contained within it a number of other "final products." For example, students participated in the design of the play's set and costumes. Moreover, the play incorporated musical performances (Adam and Eve's musical duet of a medieval French song), as well as dance performances choreographed and performed by the students.

In addition to the performance itself, we had our instructional technology department record a DVD version of the performance, which can be used in a range of future classes, including introductory and advanced French literature courses. Both the performance and the DVD incorporated multimedia components. For example, the performance included the screening of two short films produced collaboratively by the instructor and students: a short performance of Adam and Eve lip-syncing a modern French song ("Tout va bien"); and a montage composed of images and clips of the 2005 riots in France, Jean-Marie Le Pen, and other clearly identifiable French social issues. The latter was designed to help students make critical connections between the "fall" of Adam and Eve and the "fall" of French political and economic dominance in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. These short films were included in the DVD version of the play, a copy of which all the students received.

Finally, those students who had smaller speaking roles in the play were also responsible for writing, designing, and producing a play program, written in French and translated in English. The program provided some brief historical and literary context to the play and all of its text and images were scripted or chosen by the students.

Assessing the Project: Evidence of Student Learning

The last condition for successful project-based activities stated by Stoller is that they "conclude with student reflections on both the process

and the product" (24). As their final task in the *Jeu d'Adam* project, students were asked to reflect on their experience of and participation in various aspects of the project:

Analyze the stylistic choices we made in our production and why we made them. To what degree did we respect the style, tone, and meaning of the original play and to what degree did we alter the medieval spirit of the play? Discuss the implications of these alterations for the play's meaning. Make reference to the scholarly texts we read in class in your answer.

These analyses, excerpts of which have been cited above, highlight what students learned from the experience of performing *Le jeu d'Adam*. Among other things, they reflect an enhanced understanding of the play as text and the nature of theatrical performance.

Addressing the "5 C's" of ACTFL's Standards

Miller discusses the benefits of PBL for meeting the goals of ACTFL's Standards: "promoting communication, integrating the study of culture with language, making connections between language and content, making comparisons between the students' first and second languages, and establishing communities both inside and outside the school walls" (237). As I have suggested above, the *Jeu d'Adam* project addressed the ACTFL standards in a number of ways.

Standard 1 (Communication in Languages Other Than English)

This project met all aspects of the standard. During in-class and out-of-class discussion, rehearsals, and the performance itself, students consistently "engaged in conversations, provided and obtained information, and exchanged opinions" in French (1.1). They were also required to understand and interpret both written and spoken French through their research on *Le jeu d'Adam* (1.2), and through the performance itself, as they presented their work to an audience of listeners (1.3).

Standard 2 (Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures)

This project not only helped students gain knowledge and understanding of an important literary text, but also to make connections between this text and contemporary French issues such as the 2005 riots.

Standard 3 (Connect with other Disciplines and Acquire Information)

The *Jeu d'Adam* project provided a context in which students were able to make connections with students and faculty from other disciplines

(3.1) because they collaborated with the Theater Department. Also, adapting a French medieval play for a modern, predominantly Midwestern American audience enabled students to acquire information from another viewpoint (3.2) because they were forced to think critically across temporal and geographic divides in order to make the play relevant and entertaining to its audience.

Standard 4 (Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture)

In addition to the enhancement of students' understanding of literary and historical understanding of a canonical French text, numerous discussions took place during this project about religion, gender, the nature of power in society, etc., which required students to compare medieval French perspectives with their own modern American viewpoint (4.2).

Standard 5 (Participate in Multilingual Communities at Home and Around the World)

Although students did not necessarily use French beyond the school setting in this project (5.1), they did use it in an authentic setting outside the traditional boundaries of the classroom. They also provided a meaningful language experience for less advanced students. Because the project was fun and creative, it promoted the idea that French can be used for personal enjoyment and enrichment (5.2).

In conclusion, the *Jeu d'Adam* project offers a possible model for how to approach advanced L2 content courses in a way that reaps the various benefits of PBL while also addressing the "5 C's" of foreign language learning. Projects like this one help show how the teaching of traditional and canonical course content is not necessarily out of sync with current scholarship on second language pedagogy and on foreign language advocacy in a rapidly changing academic and global climate.

Appendix A

Select Bibliography of Student Readings about *Le jeu d'Adam*

Although all the following articles were made available before and during the preparation of the *Jeu d'Adam* project, students were only required to identify, read, summarize, and discuss in class those articles that related most directly to the production and staging of the play (asterisked below).

- Accarie, Maurice. "Féminisme et antiféminisme dans *Le jeu d'Adam*". *Le Moyen Âge* (1981): 207–26.
- _____. "Théologie et morale dans *Le jeu d'Adam*". *Revue des langues romanes* (1978): 123–47.
- Beck, Jonathan. "Genesis, Sexual Antagonism, and the Defective Couple of the Twelfth-Century *Jeu d'Adam*." *Representations* 29 (1990): 124–45.
- Blumreich-Moore, Kathleen. "Original Sin as Treason in Act 1 of the 'Mystère d'Adam.'" *Philological Quarterly* 72.2 (1993): 125–42.
- Colletta, John Philip. "Influence of the Visual Arts Evident in the *Jeu d'Adam*." *Studies in Medieval Culture* 12 (1978): 73–83.
- *Frank, Grace. "The Genesis and Staging of the *Jeu d'Adam*." *PMLA* 59.1 (1944): 7–17.
- Fries, Maureen. "The Evolution of Eve in Medieval French and English Religious Drama." *Studies in Philology* 99.1 (2002) 1–16.
- Grimbert, Joan Tasker. "Eve as Adam's *pareil*: Equivalence and Subordination in the *Jeu d'Adam*." *Literary Aspects of Courtly Culture: Selected Papers from the Seventh Triennial Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society*. Ed. D. Maddox and S. Sturm-Maddox. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994. 29–37.
- Hunt, Tony. "The Unity of the *Play of Adam (Ordo Representacionis Ade)*." *Romania* 96 (1975): 368–88.
- *Jones, Robin F. "A Medieval Prescription for Performance: *Le jeu d'Adam*." *Performing Texts*. Ed. M. Issacharoff and R.F. Jones. Philadelphia: UP of Pennsylvania, 1988. 101–15.
- Justice, Steven. "The Authority of Ritual in the *Jeu d'Adam*." *Speculum* 62.4 (1987): 851–64.
- Kostoroski-Kadish, Emilie. "Feminism" in the *Jeu d'Adam*." *Kentucky Romance Quarterly* 22 (1975) : 209–22.
- Lynn, Thérèse B. "Pour une réhabilitation d'Ève." *French Review* 48.5 (April 1975): 871–77.
- *McConachie, Bruce. "The Staging of the *Mystère d'Adam*." *Theatre Survey* 20 (1979): 27–42.
- Mickel, Emanuel. "Faith, Memory, Treason, and Justice in the *Ordo Representacionis Ade (Jeu d'Adam)*." *Romania* 112.1–2 (1991): 129–54.
- Nykrop, Per. "*Le jeu d'Adam*: une interprétation." *Mosaic: A Journal for the Comparative Study of Literature* 8.4 (1975): 7–16.

*Pensom, Roger. "Theatrical Space in the *Jeu d'Adam*." *French Studies* 47.3 (1993): 257–76.

Schrott, Angela. "Que fais, Adam? Questions and Seduction in the *Jeu d'Adam*." *Historical Dialogue Analysis*. Ed. A.H. Jucker, G. Fritz, and F. Lebsanft. Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1999. 331–70.

Appendix B

Excerpts from Students' Final Analyses of the Project

The following are excerpts (in French, with moderate editing on my part) of student analyses of the final production of the play. I have provided a one-line summary (in English) of each excerpt.

Student 1: The experience of "interpreting" the role of Satan was valuable.

Quand j'y pense après avoir joué le rôle, c'est difficile de dire comment j'ai construit le personnage de Satan, mais il me semble que surtout j'ai cherché l'émotion de chaque parole, j'ai expérimenté avec le rythme, j'ai fait des altérations aux répliques [...] Je n'arriverai jamais à expliquer comment je suis entré dans les bottes du Diable, tout ce que je peux dire, c'est que le personnage existait déjà en moi-même. Je ne l'ai pas fait sortir, il est sorti par lui-même [...] Mon début théâtral était beaucoup plus incroyable que j'avais anticipé [...] C'était magnifique.

Student 2: Our production was successful because it adapted the medieval message of the play for a modern audience.

Au début du semestre, j'ai douté de nos capacités de faire une production du *Jeu d'Adam*. Plus spécifiquement, j'ai douté de mes capacités de jouer un rôle dans la pièce et de nos capacités de rendre la production assez intéressante pour le public. Heureusement, j'avais tort [...] Après avoir lu la pièce, je l'ai trouvée assez facile à comprendre (après tout, qui ne connaît pas l'histoire d'Adam et Ève?). Le problème pour moi était que je n'ai pas vu le charme de cette pièce. Elle ne me semblait pas appropriée pour aujourd'hui. Je l'ai vue comme une réitération du pouvoir de l'Église sur le peuple du Moyen Âge (comme *La vie de Saint Alexis*, peut-être). Ce n'était pas mon désir de transmettre le même message à notre public, même si tout le monde connaît l'histoire et probablement personne ne serait offensé. J'étais hyper-contente donc qu'on ait décrispé la pièce en infusant un peu d'humour sans perdre tout le sens original [...] On a peut-être dévié du sens médiéval, mais comme une bonne œuvre d'art, *Le jeu d'Adam* était écrit avec la possibilité de l'adaptation à travers les âges. On a fait des changements pour divertir notre public.

Student 3: Our interpretation of the text allowed us to highlight its inherent ambiguity.

Nous avons choisi de représenter les personnages plutôt traditionnellement. On pourrait reconnaître tous les personnages si on était familier avec l'histoire d'Adam et Ève [...] Parce que notre interprétation n'a pas été radicale, nous avons pu souligner l'ambiguïté inhérente du texte. Bien que Dieu dise à Ève d'obéir à Adam, cela n'arrive pas. En fait, Adam se soumet à la volonté d'Ève. Et Sarah a parfaitement souligné cette ambiguïté—adorable et gentille jusqu'au moment où elle veut quelque chose. J'aime la phrase: "Tu es un lâche!" Et nous avons insisté sur la vanité d'Ève, ce qui la rend plus vulnérable à Satan et sa flatterie.

Student 4: Introducing modern elements into the play helped make it a success.

Nous avons ajouté bien des aspects modernes et différents au jeu, mais nous avons aussi gardé les aspects de l'original. L'usage du latin était gardé partout dans le jeu, dans le dialogue et aussi dans les chansons. Nous avons ajouté des vidéos modernes pour le commencement et la chute du jeu, qui ont été des parties très importantes. La combinaison des styles modernes et traditionnels a contribué au succès de la pièce.

Students 5 and 6: Performing a play helps us to understand it better, brings it to life.

Au début, je n'avais aucun désir de jouer dans une pièce, parce que je suis assez timide et je n'aime pas les présentations publiques. Quand j'ai entendu qu'on allait jouer cette pièce, j'ai failli laisser tomber la classe en vérité, mais je suis restée parce que j'aime les classes de français en général, même si elles me font peur. Alors, je suis restée et j'en suis très contente [...] Une raison pourquoi j'aimais le jeu était parce que j'avais beaucoup plus d'appréciation pour la pièce et [...] je comprenais le texte beaucoup plus après l'avoir entendu quelques fois et après avoir vu les rôles joués par les acteurs [...] C'est toujours plus facile de comprendre une pièce quand elle est jouée par les acteurs que de la lire en texte tout simple.

La production était utile pour beaucoup de raisons. Bien que nous n'écrivions pas d'analyse pour les personnages, je pense que chaque étudiant devait réfléchir beaucoup sur comment nous pourrions interpréter les caractéristiques des personnages. Après quelques répétitions, les personnages développaient des personnalités distinctes. Cette transformation était vraiment apparente et amusante à voir.

Student 7: Memorizing lines in a foreign language was challenging but useful.

J'ai joué le rôle d'Adam, donc il fallait que je mémorise beaucoup de répliques (mais pas autant que les autres personnages principaux). Mémoriser tant de répliques dans une langue étrangère était un défi, mais un bon exercice de mémoire.

Student 8: The production allowed students to analyze the relationships between the characters.

Au commencement, les étudiants trouvaient le texte ennuyeux et surtout ils avaient peur de paraître cocasses dans leurs rôles. C'est quand nous avons eu l'opportunité d'explorer les relations entre les personnages que nous avons commencé à devenir plus confiants et moins nerveux. Jusque-là nous avons beaucoup discuté la mise en scène—les costumes, la possibilité d'ajouter de la musique et de la danse, de la vidéo, etc. Bien sûr que ces éléments sont très importants [...] mais en travaillant avec les paroles du texte, les étudiants ont commencé à comprendre les motivations des personnages et plus tard à mettre en pratique leurs actions [...] On a découvert qu'Adam n'était pas stupide ou passif, qu'Ève était aussi compliquée qu'Adam, et que Satan pouvait devenir contrarié et fâché.

Notes

¹In the original text of *Le jeu d'Adam* there are five acts. Only the first three concern the story of Adam and Eve ("Création," "La tentation et la chute," and "Le châtement"). We dropped the last two acts ("Le meurtre d'Abel" and "La procession des prophètes") from our performance in the interest of time. The text was adapted—with modernizations to the French—from Jeanroy (39–66).

²Once rehearsals began, it was most practical for me to direct the production, but I did encourage input from students on how to shape and perform their roles.

³See in particular: Bräuer; Haggstrom; Ryan-Scheutz and Colangelo; Savoia.

⁴I have included excerpts of student analyses of the play in Appendix B.

⁵We were extraordinarily fortunate to be able to collaborate with a highly energetic and supportive faculty member from our Theater department, who enlisted the help of her students and who procured for us the use of the student theater. She also attended several rehearsals and gave us invaluable feedback. While this level of collaboration is not always possible, it is worth the effort to plan ahead for this kind of project and line up any support or assistance possible from colleagues, students and staff in other departments, as appropriate.

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