"A Body Past Compare": Romeo and Juliet and the Language of Appearance

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Methods and Procedures

Step 1: Content Analysis

Wiring independently, data extraction of all appearance-related language was performed by the researcher and advisor, an expert in the field of New Criticism. Both J. Anderson and C. Anderson (1984) have emphasized the importance of analyzing texts based on the interplay between language and visual elements. In this study, the researchers and advisors constructed a system for visual interpretation of texts that adopts the literary method of New Criticism and converts it into a system for visual interpretation of texts. The researchers and advisors extracted all appearance-related language from the play and then coded it based on their own interpretation, resulting in a set of 844 data points.

Content Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appearance-related Language</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Body and dress</td>
<td>630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body composition</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After calculating reliability, the researcher and advisor met to compare the results. The researchers and advisors extracted all appearance-related language from the play and then coded it based on their own interpretation, resulting in a set of 844 data points.

Step 2: Literary and Narrative Analysis

After the literary and narrative analysis, the researchers and advisors used a variety of visual techniques to create a series of quick sketches to reflect on creative meaning and to evaluate design decisions. Eight formal renderings were drawn with Copic marker and adjusted in Adobe Photoshop. These illustrative processes guided how the extracted themes were ultimately visualized in the costumes of Juliet, Romeo, and Mercutio.

Step 3: Comparative Analysis

Having studied the text and discussed thematic content, the researcher examined costume designs for previous productions of Romeo and Juliet. The researchers and advisors also constructed costumes for a hypothetical production of Romeo and Juliet. The costumes were designed to visually represent the themes of New Criticism, focusing on the interplay between language and visual elements. The researchers and advisors used various techniques, including beading, and improvisatory smocking to create twists and pleats that mirrored Juliet's dark and complex language.

Step 4: Costume Design Illustration

After the literary, narrative, and comparative analyses have been completed, the researcher designed costume designs for a hypothetical production of Romeo and Juliet, based on the designs extracted from the text. In order to bring the designs to life, the researcher created a series of quick sketches to reflect on creative meaning and to evaluate design decisions. Eight formal renderings were drawn with Copic marker and adjusted in Adobe Photoshop. These illustrative processes guided how the extracted themes were ultimately visualized in the costumes of Juliet, Romeo, and Mercutio.

Romeo’s Costume

Romeo is a young and noble, largely taking a pacifist role in the feud between the Capulets and Montagues. He is characterized by his obsession with the beauty ideals. Most prominent in his repeated use of the description "fair" and his constant celebrations of Romeo’s beauty. The costume was designed to visually represent the beauty ideals and to create an effect that mirrored Juliet’s dark and complex language.

Mercutio’s Costume

Mercutio is bright, incredibly intelligent teenage friend of Romeo’s, constantly playing with the theme of the Hidden or Transformative Body. The costume was designed to visually represent the theme of the Hidden or Transformative Body. The costume was designed to visually represent the theme of the Hidden or Transformative Body and to create an effect that mirrored Juliet’s dark and complex language.

Conclusions and Significance

The results of this research indicate that studying Shakespeare under the lens of appearance is rewarding and informative for both the designers and the researchers. The data revives new depths to Shakespeare’s language and employment of metaphor, resulting in a new generation of artists who can visualize the text with a new level of sophistication. This research also provides a new system of costuming that can be used by designers and scholars to explore the depth of Shakespeare’s language and imagery.

Acknowledgments

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