

Student Essay on "New Improved Sonnet Eighteen"

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Essay

`New Improved Sonnet XVIII'

Peter Titheradge

The poem `New Improved Sonnet XVIII' is a parody of Shakespeare's `Sonnet Eighteen'. It deals with themes of the modern life and how it contrasts to life in Shakespeare's time. The writer's aim is to present his idea about how the world has reinvented itself into a place where people are obsessed with commerce and losing the appreciation of love and beauty. He does this by reinventing Shakespeare's sonnet.

The poem uses Shakespeare's original sonnet and makes a parody of it. This technique is effective in presenting the writer's ideas. It creates a satire of modern society and emphasizes the changes that are being portrayed.

It also uses the technique of contrast by accentuating the difference in the style of Shakespeare and Titheradge. Titheradge mixes Shakespeare's original lines and adds business terminology as shown in `Shall I equate thee with a summer's day?', `And summer's mortgage is foreclosable' or `This is thy life-insurance, I'm thy Pru-man' (suggesting references to a Prudential insurance agent). The style juxtaposes poetic diction and commercial jargon.

The structure of the poem follows the structure of the sonnet with fourteen lines and many lines are nearly the same as that of Shakespeare's `Sonnet Eighteen'.

The text established my view of the links between reinvention and modernization but it also illustrated a new perception of reconstruction. It showed that reinvention does not only need to be a change, but can also be a reconstruction of something, where things are pulled apart and put back together to create an entirely new concept. This is parallel to the ideas presented in `Life of Pi' when Pi collects a series of different religions - Islam, Hindu and Christianity and breaks them all down. He then reconstructs the beliefs and values, and combines them into one religion he truly believes in. This is very similar to the way Titheradge reconstructs Shakespeare's sonnet to create a new concept of reinventions.

(J.T.)