

Date 2 / 26 PV Log: (circle one) Poem / Movie / Picture / LyricTitle "Amazing Grace"Author / Director / John Newton

Context (Where Found / Viewed / Read?)

I have heard "Amazing Grace" multiple times throughout my lifetime, and I have even had to play in on piano in church when I was younger, but I was compelled to do a poetic vision log on it after watching a Youtube video shown by Mr. Shakely of a guy singing and telling about the origins of the hymn.

Content / CD / Summary / Precis (Say? "Plot? Setting/Situation? Key lines/phrases scenes, etc?)

"Amazing Grace" is about a wretched person, who seemingly has no goal in life or a reason to live, but suddenly has some revelation induced by God's intercession in his or her life. Despite the "many dangers, toils and snares [the singer] has already come," he or she begins to believe and have faith in God, transforming him or her from "lost" to "found" and "blind" to being able to see. The speaker gains and builds stronger, more genuine confidence and trust in God, whom he or she believes "will be [his] shield and portion be, / As long as life endures." Despite all of the bad things that have happened in the speaker's life, he or she knows that there will be ultimate and everlasting joy in heaven "when this flesh and heart shall fail, / And mortal life shall cease."

Content / CM / Meaning? / Theme(s)?

"Amazing Grace" is a major redemption song, the story of a complete spiritual conversion and the upmost faith in God. John Newton, the writer of this hymn, used to be headstrong and disobedient, always finding a way into trouble, and this eventually led him to be aboard a slave ship, committing a heinous crime against his own race. Nevertheless, Newton experienced a spiritual epiphany during a near death experience, which caused him to greater appreciate his own life as well as that of others. When Newton realized that there indeed is a God, he began to change his ways and put his life back together. He begged for the mercy of God, leading him to an immense lifestyle and spiritual conversion. "Amazing Grace" proves that forgiveness is always possible no matter what sins a person has committed. Newton is trying to send a message to all people of all races and color that the soul can definitely be cleansed and forgiven, and that, as long as humans are repentant and truly apologetic for their actions, that no chance is the last chance in the eyes of merciful and all loving God.

Form (Diction? Construction Terms? Symbolism?)

"Amazing Grace" is a Christian hymn consisting of six stanzas of verse with a seventh stanza supposedly written by an anonymous author that sometimes replaces some of the more common stanzas. The lyrics of the song have a simple ABAB rhyme scheme, and the melody consists of a simple five notes, meaning that the music is written according to a pentatonic scale rather than a traditional octatonic scale. In the hymn, Amazing Grace symbolizes the mercy and compassion of God, who never fails to give people second chances as long as they are truly sorry for their sins.

Commentary (What do you want to say? Why like? Questions? Synthesis / Allusions-Connections / Relevance to personal experience, to literature, 20Q's? etc.)? "Poetic" Traits?

Even though "Amazing Grace" is a spiritual hymn and is obviously not a part of the current generation's popular culture, I still really enjoy the message that the lyrics of the song give off. Sometimes, when I am in a dreary mood or am feeling depressed about my life and where it is going, I often turn to music to help lift me up and get me thinking positively again. Although I don't necessarily turn first to "Amazing Grace," I still reflect on the hymn and its lyrics in order to remind me that I am ultimately the biggest catalyst for my own change. Only I can change who I am even if I have messed up many times in my life, and "Amazing Grace" helps to change my way of thinking towards that direction. The hymn promotes in me a hope for a better future. "Amazing Grace" clearly relates to Rutherford Calhoun and his transformation as he makes a journey aboard a slave ship called the *Republic* in Charles Johnson's novel *Middle Passage*. Though Calhoun himself isn't enslaving the abducted Africans on the ship, he himself feels somewhat responsible for the crew's grotesque and horrendous actions. Calhoun starts to direct his focus more towards others rather than towards himself as he gains a greater respect for human life. His successful transformation from selfish to selfless proves how willingly forgiving God is, and that, if a person truly sets his mind to it, there it is never too late to change for the better. I find this piece of music poetic because it is quite simple and meek yet hugely promising and hopeful. The lyrics promise that beneficial transformation is always feasible, even if it seems impossible or already too late.