

John Lennon: Imagine

“Imagine” by John Lennon is one of the most iconic songs of all time, and I’m sure we’ve all heard it before somewhere. It is often used to represent the face of movements for peace, change, etc. and that is why we’ve chosen it to help answer our driving question: How does our understanding of poetry help us understand how revolutions encourage change in society.

Though the song itself was never meant to start revolutions, it outlines the ideals of a “perfect” society and tells us to imagine what the world would be like if we put peace and love before violence and turmoil.

Revolutions themselves are movements started by people with ideas, or dreams. Usually revolutions are meant to encourage change for the better, no matter how big or small they are. When someone has an idea, and they want to start a revolution, they first need to get the support of others. In doing this, they may have to challenge the overarching idea that society values to encourage a revolution against it. The lyrics of “Imagine” are telling us this— they’re saying, join me, grab hold of that spark that starts revolutions and challenges society to change (“You, you may say I’m a dreamer/But I’m not the only one/I hope someday you will join us/And the world will be as one”). Revolutions encourage change by showing us how the world, ourselves, whatever we’re striving to change could potentially look— as is exhibited in Imagine: “Imagine all the people living life in peace.”

The big idea of Imagine is encouraging change. Revolution is not bound by size— it can be big or small. Revolution is change, and it also encourages change. The lyrics go hand in hand with how many people have, are, and will start revolutions within themselves and the world, and this is also how our driving question strives to connect poetry to starting revolutions of many kinds.