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A POEM WITHOUT AN AUTHOR

By Jordan Kistler

"We are the music makers, and we are the dreamers of dreams . . . "

THESE LINES BEGIN AN "ODE" which has permeated culture throughout the last hundred years. In 1912, Edward Elgar set it to music, as did Hungarian composer Zoltán Kodály in 1964, to commemorate the 700th anniversary of Merton College, Oxford. In 1971, Gene Wilder spoke the opening lines as Willy Wonka in the film *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory.* The words appear as epigraphs in an eclectic range of novels, including science fiction (Raymond E. Feist's *Rage of a Demon King*), fantasy (Elizabeth Haydon's *The Assassin King*), and historical fiction (E. V. Thompson's *The Music Makers*). They are quoted in an even more varied selection of books, including travelogues (Warren Rovetch's *The Creaky Traveler in Ireland*), textbooks (Arnold O. Allen's *Probability, Statistics and Queueing Theory* and R. S. Vassan and Sudha Seshadri's *Textbook of Medicine*), New Age self-help books (Raven Kaldera's *Moon Phase Astrology: The Lunar Key to Your Destiny*), autobiographies (Hilary Liftin's *Candy and Me, a Love Story*) and pedagogical guides (Lindsay Peer and Gavin Reid's *Dyslexia – Successful Inclusion in the Secondary School*).

The poem's unattributed appearances are even more diffuse. The lines were quoted in the 1995 film *Last Summer in the Hamptons* as well as a 2008 episode of the animated comedy *American Dad*. They appear in song lyrics, song titles, and album titles in a variety of musical genres, including Christian rock (Eden Burning's "Movers and Shakers"), folk (Vikki Clayton's album *Movers & Shakers*), electronic (Aphex Twin's "We Are the Music Makers"), and rap (Living Legends's "Nothing Less"). "Music Makers" is the name of countless music academies, foundations, and non-profits. Even more enduring, it was in this same "Ode" that the phrase "movers and shakers" was coined – a phrase far more ubiquitous than the poem from which it is taken.

The "Ode" was written in 1873 by Arthur W. E. O'Shaughnessy, and yet the name O'Shaughnessy brings little recognition today, even from scholars of the Victorian period. In this article, I will explore this phenomenon to demonstrate that circumstances occurring in the twentieth century severed the poem from its author, allowing the "Ode" to gain cultural traction at the same time as O'Shaughnessy's poetic reputation languished. A consideration of the historical context of the poem, alongside its formal and thematic elements, demonstrates how the poem survived and promulgated despite the loss of O'Shaughnessy from the canon of Victorian poets. Deliberate alteration of the text of the poem, in the form of both abridgement

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and restructuring, alongside the widespread modernist attack on the style and ideology of Victorian verse, combined to create what is, essentially, a poem without an author.

In order to test how widespread this phenomenon is, I conducted an informal survey completed by 112 participants from fourteen countries (80% of whom were from either the United States or the United Kingdom).[1] In it, I asked participants to state whether certain lines of poetry were familiar to them, and then to guess the author and time period composition. Of the fifteen samples, fourteen appeared on a list of the "most quoted" poetry on the Internet, as determined by Google hits.[2] The fifteenth was, of course, O'Shaughnessy's "Ode." Forty percent of participants recognized the lines "we are the music makers, and we are the dreamers of dreams." This is comparable to several more canonical works of Western poetry included on this survey, such as Gertrude Stein's "a rose is a rose is a rose" (44%), John Milton's "better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven" (47%), and Emily Dickinson's "because I could not stop for death, he kindly stopped for me" (53%).

What I sought to understand with this survey was how closely famous lines of poetry are associated with their authors. While there were some mistakes in attribution (51% were sure "How do I love thee?" was written by Shakespeare), on the whole, those who recognized lines of poetry were also able to identify the author. Thus, 30% of participants correctly named Emily Dickinson as the author of the quote above, 27% correctly identified John Milton, and 13% were able to connect Stein to the lines from "Sacred Emily." However, a mere .04% of participants (five out of 112) were able to name O'Shaughnessy – the same number as those who attributed the lines to Willy Wonka. The strong connection of the O'Shaughnessy poem to music was also revealed in the guesses of author: the band Aerosmith appeared (perhaps because of their 1973 song "Dream On"), as well as Elgar, Bob Dylan, and ABBA.

Participants' guesses at the period of composition of these quotes were also telling. For most of the lines of poetry, the majority were correct in time period (given in increments of 100 years, e.g., 1800 – 1900). However, in the case of O'Shaughnessy, the majority of participants (57%) thought the O'Shaughnessy quote was written between 1900 and 2000. This estimate is presumably deeply influenced by Elgar, *Willy Wonka*, and the lines' other cultural appearances, which all occurred in the twentieth century. In this way, frequent quotation has lent the poem a more modern air to many people and further served to separate the poem both from its author and its historical context.

The "Ode" was first published on 30 August 1873 in the *Athenaeum* and then formed the introduction to O'Shaughnessy's third collection of poetry, *Music and Moonlight*, published in March of 1874. The volume was generally well reviewed, with the *Athenaeum* saying it "contain[s] a number of fine passages, written in a bold, vigorous style, and leave[s] a distinct impression on the mind" ("Mr. O'Shaughnessy's New Poems" 382). The *Academy's* 1874 review was even more glowing, writing of "this most modern of modern singers": "there is an atmosphere about one class of these lyrics that reminds one of the mood one falls into on a summer afternoon, lying in a low warm nook among the rushes, close to the shining level of some river." Of the "Ode" itself, the *Academy* writes, "The opening verses of the book, dealing with the lofty function of poets in a spirit of the fullest fervour and enthusiastic faith, are particularly brilliant and original" (Gosse 360).

The "Ode" deals with a much-discussed subject during this period: the role of the artist in society. On this issue, O'Shaughnessy sides with William Morris and Matthew Arnold, who advocated for the positive role of art in society. In the "Ode" O'Shaughnessy strives to define

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art as a "useful" form of work, taking on the rhetoric of the mid-Victorian notion of "use" and "utility," as William Morris does in his 1884 lecture "Useful Work *versus* Useless Toil." The "Ode," which suggests that artists are a powerful force for change, invokes Matthew Arnold's notion of the "sweetness and light" (37; ch. 1) that would come from a "Hellenised" world. By suggesting that it is artists who are the "movers and shakers" of society, this poem lays the groundwork for O'Shaughnessy's theory of "art for humanity" (in contrast to art for art's sake) which he developed over the course of his career, and which would come to full maturity in his 1881 "Song of a Fellow-Worker."[3]

The "Ode" was, therefore, grounded in the time and place of its composition. However, the cultural afterlife of the poem has served to evacuate it of its intended meaning and separate it from both its time of composition and its author.

In 1897 Francis T. Palgrave printed seventeen of O'Shaughnessy's poems, including the "Ode," in the second series of his popular anthology *The Golden Treasury*. In fact, he so liked O'Shaughnessy's verse that he chose the "Ode" as the opening poem of the volume. This inclusion paved the way for many more, causing Edmund Gosse to note in 1925, "[O'Shaughnessy] appears in the anthologies, from which he will never be dislodged" (*Silhouettes* 174). The "Ode" was printed in anthologies throughout the twentieth century, including Louis Untermeyer's *Modern British Poetry* in 1920, E. A. Sharp and J. Matthay's *Lyra Celtica: An Anthology of Representative Celtic Poetry* of 1924, Arthur Quiller-Couch's *The Oxford Book of English Verse, 1250–1918* in 1939, stretching forward to Carl Woodring and James Sharpiro's *The Columbia Anthology of British Poetry* in 1995, Valentine Cunningham's *The Victorians: An Anthology of Poetry and Poetics* of 2000, and into the present.

Anthologies are often cited as the source of the canon, particularly in poetry,[4] but O'Shaughnessy's frequent anthologization has not helped to secure him lasting fame. Even these attributed appearances serve to wrench the poem away from O'Shaughnessy. In 1897 Palgrave made the decision to excerpt the nine-stanza poem down to just the first three; all of the anthologies mentioned above have followed in his footsteps. Today, poetry websites like bartleby.com, poemhunter.com, and poetryfoundation.org continue this tradition, reducing the poem to a mere twenty-four lines. In doing so, the poem as O'Shaughnesssy intended it is lost. Most people who know the poem are not aware that it was ever three times longer than the version with which they are familiar.

The first stanza of the poem addresses the traditional Romantic image of the artist, lonely and separate from the world, "sitting by desolate streams." O'Shaughnessy then rejects that separateness, declaring that artists are the "mover and shakers/Of the world." Stanzas two and three celebrate the power of the artist, but it is a destructive power, conquering kings, trampling kingdoms, and overthrowing past civilizations. It is in stanzas four through nine that O'Shaughnessy paints a picture of what a new world order, led by poets, would look like, celebrating growth and creation. Rather than praising artists as the most powerful members of society, the poem glorifies the unifying power of art, as evinced in stanza four: "The soldier, the king, and the peasant/Are working together in one,/Till our dream shall become their present,/And their work in the world be done" (3). It is in these final stanzas that we find the central idea of O'Shaughnessy's "art for humanity" and the Arnoldian notion of civilizing the mob through the power of art. By excising the final six stanzas of the "Ode," the anthologies shift the message of the poem towards a celebration of the artist as dreamer, "Wandering by lone sea-breakers," and the artist as a potential means of revolution and

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destruction, with none of the optimism and integration of art into mainstream society for which O'Shaughnessy actually advocated.

Elgar's 1912 arrangement of the poem similarly changes the original to suit his own purposes. *The Cambridge Companion to Elgar* tells us:

> He set the poem as an unbroken span, with no cuts; but he repeats the 'artist' theme [the first two lines of the poem] six times as a refrain. . . . For all the grand, forceful passages of music, the impression that remains is of the artist's apartness: music can influence only the inner life of the individual, not politics, nor empires, nor the building of great cities. (Grimley and Ruston 60)

By using the first two lines of the poem as a refrain, Elgar shifts the meaning of the poem away from a meditation on the societal impact and responsibility of the artist to "the introspective process of creation" (Grimley and Ruston 61). Like the anthology excerpts, the focus again falls on the first stanza, with an emphasis on "dreamers of dreams" that undermines the artist as one who builds cities and creates empires. By merely repeating two of O'Shaughnessy's own lines, Elgar creates an ode which argues for the opposite of what O'Shaughnessy intended: it takes the side of the solitary Romantic artist, separate from the world. Elgar further co-opts the poem as he self-quotes throughout the piece, referencing his past oeuvre. As Grimley and Ruston assert, "Taken together the quotations turn this music from being a setting of O'Shaughnessy's "Ode" into what amounts to Elgar's musical and spiritual autobiography" (62). The piece becomes far more about Elgar than about the author of the words. As with the reduction of the poem to just three stanzas – or even just its opening lines, as in *Willy Wonka* – the poem is co-opted to suit the needs of each specific cultural appearance, separating it from O'Shaughnessy himself.

At the same time as the "Ode" mutated and made its way, unattributed, into music, literature, and film, O'Shaughnessy's poetic reputation was rapidly diminishing. Although O'Shaughnessy was well reviewed and moderately successful during his lifetime, as early as 1897 and the release of the *Golden Treasury: Second Series*, he had fallen out of favour. The *Academy*, after noting that the first *Golden Treasury* "brought together a selection of English lyrical poetry which every household was happy in possessing," roundly attacked the second series, stating "The present selection will only baffle and distress everybody who believed, as we did, in Mr. Palgrave's preparedness for his task. Its sins of omission and of commission alike are mortal and past blotting out" ("Gold and Dross" 317). The reviewer took issue with many of the choices Palgrave made in this second series, but was particularly incensed by the number of O'Shaughnessy's inclusions, noting that at seventeen poems, O'Shaughnessy's appearances outnumber Christina Rossetti (15), Robert Browning (14), Matthew Arnold (13), and D. G. Rossetti (12).

The change in O'Shaughnessy's poetic reputation can be traced, ironically, to the success of the "Ode" and the ideological changes that came with that success. As early as 1897, O'Shaughnessy was associated with a particular kind of distasteful Victorian verse. The changes made to O'Shaughnessy's most famous poem helped to solidify his reputation as a representative of "vapid fancy in Victorian verse" ("Gold and Dross" 318), and it is this reputation that led modernist critics to mention O'Shaughnessy by name in their disavowal of the Victorian period. In F. R. Leavis's 1932 attack on Victorian poetics, *New Bearing in English Poetry*, he lists poems that define the "poetical" in the nineteenth century; O'Shaughnessy's "Ode" is the last of the seven he mentions by name (which include poems by

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Keats, Tennyson, Morris, and Rossetti). For Leavis, these poems are representative of a kind of poetry that "must be the direct expression of simple emotions, and these of a limited class: the tender, the exalted, the poignant, and, in general, the sympathetic. . . . Wit, play of intellect, stress of cerebral muscle had no place: they could only hinder the reader's being 'moved' – the correct poetical response" (9). Leavis singles O'Shaughnessy out of the group previously named, and gives the first stanza of the "Ode" as an example of the kind of poetry written by someone with "nothing personal to communicate," the kind of poet who has a "desire to write poetry" but lacks the "essential" qualification of "the need to communicate something of his own" (10–11). Leavis suggests that "nineteenth-century poetry . . . was characteristically preoccupied with the creation of a dream-world" (10), and thus O'Shaughnessy's conception of the "dreamers of dreams" falls under his attack. However, as we have seen, the "Ode" is not concerned with a dream world, but rather with reality and the ways art might help to improve it. The ideology that Leavis attacks in the "Ode" is one that was grafted onto the poem by Elgar and the anthologists, and is further solidified by Leavis's quotation of only the first stanza here.

T. S. Eliot, too, singled O'Shaughnessy in his literary criticism. In "What is Minor Poetry?" written in 1957, Eliot selects O'Shaughnessy as the definitive example of a category of minor poets "who have written just one, or only a very few, good poems: so that there seems no reason for anybody going beyond the anthology." Here O'Shaughnessy comes into a discussion of the use of poetry anthologies, and it is his "Ode" to which Eliot refers, noting that it "is in any anthology which includes late nineteenth-century verse" (44). In this brief mention Eliot actually praises the poem which Leavis denigrated, but in doing so, he dismisses O'Shaughnessy's remaining 116 published poems as not worth reading. Even further, he dismisses much of the "Ode" itself, as the anthologies to which he refers only print one-third of the original poem. Eliot treats anthologies as repositories of the poetic canon, but fails to address them as actors upon the canon, which change meaning, shape context, and exert influence, much as Eliot himself does in this essay. The decision of countless editors of anthologies to print just a portion of the "Ode" has shaped O'Shaughnessy's reputation, as has Eliot's assertion of O'Shaughnessy's status as a "minor poet." Although Eliot began this essay by claiming "What I am concerned to dispel is any derogatory association connected with the term 'minor poetry'" (39), his casual dismissal of O'Shaughnessy's poetic corpus has haunted O'Shaughnessy studies ever since.[5]

W. H. Auden's *Nineteenth Century Minor Poets* repeats Eliot's categorization of O'Shaughnessy, even while noting the subjectivity of such categories:

> 'Who is a major, who a minor poet?' is a question to which it is impossible to give even a fairly satisfactory answer. One is sometimes tempted to think it nothing but a matter of academic fashion: a poet is major if, in the curriculum of the average college English department, there is a course devoted solely to the study of his work, and a minor if there is not. One thing, at least, is obvious: the distinction cannot be made on the basis of a purely aesthetic criterion. (17)

Despite this, Auden does present a checklist of criteria that define the "major" poet, which include writing poems which "show a wide range in subject matter and treatment" and which "exhibit an unmistakable originality of vision and style" (17). He also demands poets in whom "the process of maturing continues until he dies so that, if confronted by two poems of his of equal merit but written at different times, the reader can immediately say which was

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written first" (17). It is important to note that in this anthology, Auden also includes Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Christina Rossetti, George Meredith, and William Morris – many of whom are considered "major" poets today. In fact, of O'Shaughnessy's immediate contemporaries, only Swinburne is identified as a major poet.

The truncation of the "Ode" and subsequent re-contextualization of the poem in its many cultural appearances have helped to ensure the "Ode"'s longevity, but also helped to generate this modernist attack which singled O'Shaughnessy out as a representative of a certain kind of dreamy, personal poetry – which does not represent the majority of his oeuvre. This attack created O'Shaughnessy as a "minor poet," a status which further separates him from his "Ode," the popularity of which far surpasses his own recognition.

Thus, the appropriation of the poem by others diminished O'Shaughnessy's poetic reputation at the same time as it helped to ensure the survival of the "Ode" itself. The very obliteration of meaning from the poem which drew the modernists' ire has helped the poem to transcend the time and circumstances of its composition. It has become a well-crafted empty vessel, which can be filled with a variety of meanings and contexts, each suited to its subsequent appearances and audiences.

As the anthologies created a poem that celebrates the universal artist, Elgar shifted the "Ode" to a completely different genre, creating a separate entity that was disseminated, praised, and criticized in its own ways, separate from that of the poem O'Shaughnessy wrote and O'Shaughnessy's own poetic reputation. As a musical piece, or lines in widely distributed film and print, the poem transcended the elitist dictums of the modernists to reach the public directly and gain staying power in a way O'Shaughnessy himself did not. Ironically, this rejection of the modernists' mandates of "value" actually reinforces the central political message of the "Ode": the need for a socialist utopia of art for the people.

As context dropped away from the poem, the formal qualities of the work came to the forefront. It is here that we find much of the poem's staying power. When O'Shaughnessy writes of the "music makers" he is referring, of course, to poets, but this poem is nevertheless one of his most musical. O'Shaughnessy himself was an accomplished pianist and a wild enthusiast of Chopin – the titular "Music and Moonlight" is dedicated to the composer, as are several others of his works. He was regularly praised for his "metrical formation" (*"Review"* 694) and his "poetic craftsmanship" (Rossetti, *Correspondences* 5: 554). We can see this craftsmanship at play in the "Ode," in which O'Shaughnessy adopts one of his most musical meters, which beautifully accompanies the content of the poem. The poem is dactylic (intermixed with trochaic); this underlying beat of DUM-dum-dum is the ONE-two-three beat of a waltz. Dactylic verse is fairly uncommon in English but fits this poem perfectly – it seamlessly reflects and bolsters the content of the poem.[6] Dactylic verse is often avoided because it necessitates feminine line endings, and therefore weaker feminine rhymes. O'Shaughnessy combats this problem by clipping every other line to create masculine endings.[7]

We are the music makers,
  And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
  And sitting by desolate streams; —
World-losers and world-forsakers,
  On whom the pale moon gleams :

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Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems. (1–8)

In much of his work O'Shaughnessy favoured complicating his meter – often a simplistic ballad meter – with caesuras and enjambment, but he eschews those techniques here, end stopping nearly all of his lines. Each feminine line is seven syllables, with the masculine lines in tetrameter, lending them greater emphasis. Lines 2, 4, 6, and 8 all begin with either a conjunction or a preposition, which serve to carry the poem forward despite the end-stopped lines. This forward impetus combined with the simplistic rhyme scheme of ababcdcd, with the emphasis on the one-syllable masculine rhymes of dreams/streams/gleams/seems, make this stanza very easy to commit to memory. This is further enhanced by O'Shaughnessy's use of alliteration in the first four lines ("music makers," "dreamers of dreams").

Ease of memorization is quite often a factor in the longevity of verse, particularly that which is taught to school-age children, or consumed by a larger reading public.[8] The simplicity of the stanza is off-set by O'Shaughnessy's creation of interesting and pleasing compound nouns, in a format that hearkens to the kennings of heroic verse: "world-losers" and "world-forsakers." Alongside the popular phrase "movers and shakers," this stanza is nearly entirely dominated by easily-remembered and linguistically pleasing noun formations: "music makers," "dreamers of dreams," "world-losers," "world-forsakers." It is in this first stanza that the poem's power truly lies. The musicality of its dactylic and trochaic verse combines with the felicity of language to create eight lines that are pleasing the ear, very easy to remember, and have enough linguistic interest to offset the simple construction and rhyme scheme.

The first eight lines of the poem are centred on declarative statements, defining what artists *are*. The only other verbs that appear in these lines are rather weak – "wandering" and "sitting" – and add to the overall picture of the lonely artist, as emphasized by Elgar and the anthologists. In the second stanza, however, O'Shaughnessy shifts his focus to action, as he introduces the idea of artists as "movers and shakers":

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an empire's glory :
One man with a dream, at pleasure,
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
Can trample a kingdom down. (9–16)

The verbs in this stanza are all strong and active: "build," "fashion," "conquer," and "trample." These verbs are neatly linked with the accompanying nouns of songs and stories, demonstrating that dreaming and working are not divided but are instead inherently linked. This is a notion that is central to O'Shaughnessy's ideas on labor theory and the work/leisure divide, which are among the central concerns of his four volumes of verse. In this second stanza O'Shaughnessy moves from the Romantic notion of poet as inspired genius, emphasized in the first stanza's conception of what poets *are*, to a discussion of what poets can *do*, which addresses the more immediate concern of the use and impact of

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literature. O'Shaughnessy moves beyond mere vague ideas about the power of art, to engage specifically with socialist and Marxist critique, as he suggests a reformulation of society built on the collective whole.

The first half of the second stanza shifts into an aabb rhyme scheme and maintains strict tetrameter which leaves each line ending feminine. This lends lines 9–12 a sing-song quality that renders them less weighty than lines 13–16, which returns to the abab rhyme scheme with a masculine rhyme falling on lines 14 and 16 (crown/down). The effect of this shift in meter is that the first four lines seem to spiral lightly upward, as befits the miraculous creation of song (build/fashion), while the second four are weightier to emphasize the power of the poet's words for potential destruction (conquer, trample).

Nearly every version of this poem printed in the last one hundred years has ended following the third stanza:

> We, in the ages lying
> In the buried past of the earth,
> Built Nineveh with our sighing,
> And Babel itself in our mirth;
> And o'erthrew them with prophesying
> To the old of the new world's worth;
> For each age is a dream that is dying,
> Or one that is coming to birth. (17–24)

This stanza isn't as technically adept as the previous two. The adjacent "and"s in lines 19 and 20 interrupt the rhythm of the poem, as do the longer lines at 21 and 23 (nine and ten syllables, respectively). However, O'Shaughnessy maintains a strong rhythm with the simple masculine rhymes on earth/mirth/worth/birth, and while line 21 is complicated by its elision (not used elsewhere in this poem) and extra beat, line six is a pleasing encapsulation of the message of this stanza, created in the juxtaposition of "old" and "new." The simplicity of this line, especially in comparison to the previous (which strays from the directness of the poem with two multisyllabic words), lets it trip along to the musical beat of the poem and nicely sets up the last two lines, which are some of the most memorable of the poem.

The final lines of stanza three form a neat enough package that one can understand the impulse of anthologists to end the poem here. However, lines 23 and 24 actually introduce the message of the rest of the poem: artists will always be shunned in their own lifetimes because they possess vision that normal men do not, but this scorn does not justify ignoring the world or refusing to engage with its problems. Although stylistically O'Shaughnessy should be grouped with the poets of the 1870s who strove to emulate the form and content of the French *Romantiques* and Parnassians, in the "Ode" O'Shaughnessy does not retreat to their poetic dream world as Leavis accused him of doing. Instead, he argues that poets belong in the real world, precisely because it is "unpoetical" and therefore requires their influence.

A consideration of the cultural history of the "Ode" could end here, for very few people have read stanzas four through nine since their publication in 1874. These final, forgotten stanzas consider the cyclical nature of the world, as introduced at the end of stanza three (quoted above). O'Shaughnessy bolsters this cyclical message his word choice and the satisfaction that comes at the end of lines of poetry, in rhyme. For instance, in stanza six

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he brackets the second half of the stanza with the words "scorning" and "scorned" which support the rhyme of may/yesterday to give the stanza a strong sense of closure.

> And, scorning the dream of to-morrow,
> Are bringing to pass, as they may,
> In the world, for its joy or its sorrow,
> The dream that was scorned yesterday.

Stanza seven contains the lines "But we, with our dreaming and singing,/Ceaseless and sorrowless we!" which again creates a tidy circular construction that lends a sense of fulfilment and completion to the poem. The following lines have the repetition of "glory" (51) and "glorious" (52) which have much the same effect. Through repetition O'Shaughnessy forges strong links between the paired lines that interweave with the return to an ababcdcd rhyme scheme. It is a deft technique that again aids in memorization and the illusion of familiarity of the lines even when the poem is first read.

The middle portion of the poem (stanzas 4–6) is weakened by O'Shaughnessy's switch to an aabb cdcd rhyme scheme which necessitates three feminine rhymes within the eight lines (a, b, and c). However, the final three stanzas return to the stronger ababcdcd pattern, and the two masculine rhymes his truncated lines allow him. It is unfortunate that almost no one has read the end of the poem since its initial publication, as the final stanza of the poem is nearly as strong as the first:

> Great hail! we cry to the comers
> From the dazzling unknown shore;
> Bring us hither your sun and your summers,
> And renew our world as of yore;
> You shall teach us your song's new numbers,
> And things that we dreamed not before :
> Yea, in spite of a dreamer who slumbers,
> And a singer who sings no more. (65–72)

Here O'Shaughnessy returns to the strong alliteration of stanza one, with "cry to the comers," "sun and your summers," "new numbers," "singer who sings." His lines grow slightly longer, with three of the eight having one or two extra syllables. This means that he has the space to employ more dactylic feet, rather than the usual interspersed trochees that make up the catalectic lines he uses for most of the poem. The prevalence of dactyls in this stanza adds to its musicality, as the waltz beat (which weaves beneath the whole of the poem) returns to the surface.

Here we come to the natural conclusion introduced by the idea that "each age is a dream that is dying,/Or one that is coming to birth." This stanza is marked by its optimism, as it presents a utopian vision of a world imbued with art. It is not a simple "dream world," but rather an argument for art as a useful form of labor that can contribute, hand in hand, to the work of men of all different careers and stations. Like Arnold's Hellenised society, the "Ode" is a genuine call for the proliferation of the arts throughout society. Foreshadowing the message of Morris's *News from Nowhere*, the "Ode" encompasses socialist notions of pleasure in work and life, and a uniting of work and leisure.

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Not only does this central concern of the poem refute the accusations thrown at O'Shaughnessy by the modernists, but it further highlights why, unlike what Eliot claimed, the poem cannot be separated from the rest of O'Shaughnessy's poetic corpus. It is not a "one-hit wonder," but rather the beginning of a theory of art and labor which O'Shaughnessy develops over the course of his life, and which he bring to fruition in his final work, *Songs of a Worker* (1881). In the titular poem of this collection, "Song of a Fellow-Worker," O'Shaughnessy shows the natural development of the theory begun in the "Ode." While the "Ode" demonstrated the benefit of art on society as a guiding force, "Song of a Fellow-Worker" focuses on the community of man, in which the artist is merely one of many productive members. Here O'Shaughnessy explicitly allies poetry with "work," and more specifically, manual labor, in a comparison of a poet and a stonemason: "My toil was fashioning thought and sound, and his was hewing stone" (*Songs of a Worker* 3). In their shared labour, performed for the greater good of the community, the two men are made equal. In this way, the poet not only creates *for* humanity, but *with* humanity. The development of this theory of "art for humanity" also speaks to Auden's requirement of maturation in a body of work; O'Shaughnessy's final volume brings the interests and concerns that dominate his oeuvre to their natural conclusion.

Throughout the "Ode" O'Shaughnessy employs very simple and direct language, without the circumlocutions and anachronistic "poetic language" that can be found in many Victorian poems. This simplicity, the unusual musicality of his chosen metre, and the easily-predicted rhymes and alliteration all add to the attraction of this poem. John Guillory and other critics of canon formation have posited that much of what decides the longevity of a poem is linguistic, rather than value-based or ideological in nature. Writing of Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," Guillory says, "The cento of quotable quotations which *is* the poem thus generates a reception-scenario characterized by the reader's pleased recognition that 'this is my truth,' while at the same time concealing the fact that this pleasure is founded upon the subliminal recognition that 'this is my language'" (92). Leah Price reiterates this in her consideration of the anthology, positing that selections were made based on the quotability of the passage (10). I believe much of the staying power of the "Ode" is generated by the ease of memorization, coupled with a simple message that transcends the arguments about the place of poetry in society it was written to, and instead speaks to anyone who sees themselves as an 'artist'. As Catherine Robson notes, poems that are anthologized, memorized, and widely promulgated, are defined by their "formal regularity [and] thematic transparency' (25). This ease of language and directness of message combine to appeal to the widest possible audience.

We return then to the unusual phenomenon of a poem whose fame far outshines that of its author. I have shown that the "Ode" transcended O'Shaughnessy's status as a "minor poet," in part by its appearances in a variety of genres and time periods. However, we have also seen that the alterations to the text that came with those cultural appropriations helped to create the very poetic reputation that led to O'Shaughnessy's branding as a minor writer.

The skewed version of Arthur O'Shaughnessy that is preserved today is a direct refutation of Eliot's definition of the "use" of anthologies. Acceptance of the canonical judgments and editorial decisions of poetic anthologies creates a false impression of the work of O'Shaughnessy. Alongside the (often unmentioned) alterations to the "Ode," the need for brevity inherent in the anthology means that the poems of O'Shaughnessy that are preserved and disseminated are his shorter love poems, which reinforce his reputation as a representative

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of the kind of minor poet who is only interested in his own emotions. If one disregards Eliot's advice and steps outside the anthology and outside the poetic canon, a very different picture of O'Shaughnessy emerges. He was a poet who was very interested in the world around him, and wrote on a wide and very diverse set of subjects, including politics, music, religion, art, evolution, and social Darwinism.

The abridgement and excision of the "Ode" allowed the modernists to graft their own ideas of Victorian poetry onto the poem, but have also helped it to rise above those critiques. The poem was able to withstand the attacks upon O'Shaughnessy's "Victorianism" levelled in the twentieth century because it lives on in music and, later, film, television, advertisements, and sound bites, helping it to appear more "modern" than ever. It is a poem which rises above author, period, and context to remain in people's affections and memory long after its composition.

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NOTES

1. This survey was circulated via social media, including Facebook and Twitter. The instructions on the survey specified that I sought answers only from people who do not hold an MA or a PhD in English Literature to prevent the results from being skewed by my own social groups. It was then disseminated by acquaintances of mine, garnering participation from a fairly wide spectrum of people in age and educational background. It is likely, however, that many of the participants hold a Bachelor's degree.
2. List taken from the blog Inky Fool: http://blog.inkyfool.com/2012/01/fifty-most-quoted-lines-of-poetry.html, posted by M. H. Forsyth, 18 Jan. 2012.
3. O'Shaughnessy introduces the phrase "art for humanity" in a letter which forms a portion of the preface to his final volume of poetry, *Songs of a Worker*, published after his death in 1881.
4. See the canon reformation discussions of the 1980s, such as Sabine Haas's "Victorian Poetry Anthologies: Their Role and Success in the Nineteenth-Century Market," *Publishing History* 17 (1985): 51–64 or Barbara Herrnstein Smith's *Contingencies of Value; Alternative Perspectives for Critical Theory* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1988). See also Leah Price, *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000).
5. Mentions of O'Shaughnessy in criticism are few, but in addition to Auden, critics such as Oskar Bronner, W. D. Paden, George K. Anderson, Oliver Elton, James K. Robinson, and Florence S. Boos have all repeated Eliot's classification in their mentions and considerations of O'Shaughnessy's poetry.
6. O'Shaughnessy was quite adept at fitting his meter to the content of his poetry. For example, nearly the entirety of his second volume, *Lays of France*, is written in iambic tetrameter, a "medieval meter" to accompany his retelling of Marie de France's 12th century lais (*Lays of France* 1872, see Harrison 137). In "Song of a Fellow-Worker" he employs the longest line he ever used, a decapentasyllabic line that is a Byzantium form of "political verse." This meter has a long oral and folk tradition and is political in the sense of "of the people" marking it out as a very deliberate choice for this Marxist poem (*Songs of a Worker* 1881). Michael J. Jeffreys discusses the conflation of the Greek words "politikós" and "demotikós" to define this form as popular or "common" (147).
7. With some variation as required by the poem, O'Shaughnessy alternates a seven syllable line of a dactyl followed by two trochees, with a line of tetrameter: a single slack beat followed by two dactyls and then a single stressed beat (to form a masculine line ending).
8. See Robson's consideration of the widespread memorization of verse which she classifies as "straightforward and simple poems that rhyme" (20). I have only anecdotal evidence that O'Shaughnessy's "Ode" has appeared in classrooms: the testimony of an elementary music teacher

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in Mars Hill, North Carolina; comments posted to poetry websites; and the recitation of the poem by my own mother at the graduation ceremony of the class of 1971 in Downingtown, Pennsylvania.

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