

Arthur O'Shaughnessy: An Anglo-Irish Poet?

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Abstract: This article examines Arthur O'Shaughnessy's identity as an Anglo-Irish author and his place in the Irish literary canon. It aims to show that he has been the subject of critical neglect, despite the fact that in his life, as in his works, O'Shaughnessy engaged with issues which had particular import to notions of Irish identity politics in the mid-nineteenth century. With this in mind, I address who and what the Anglo-Irish are and suggest this term is fluid and its relevance changes according to different circumstances. Additionally, outlining O'Shaughnessy's family heritage and his relationships with members of the Anglo-Irish elite, this piece illustrates that O'Shaughnessy's life was not devoid of Irish connections. Discussing O'Shaughnessy's inclusion and exclusion in anthologies and critical debates surrounding the nature of Irish writing, this article will show that because he did not place Ireland at the centre of his works, O'Shaughnessy has been overshadowed by more established figures in Irish literary history. Finally, examining a small selection of O'Shaughnessy's poetry, namely 'The Neglected Harp' (1870) from *The Epic of Women and Other Poems* (1870) and 'Ode' (1873) from *Music and Moonlight: Poems and Songs* (1874), I demonstrate that because he employed Irish Romanticist tropes and symbolism, O'Shaughnessy's neglect in the arena of Irish Studies and his place in the Irish canon requires a reappraisal.

Keywords: Arthur O'Shaughnessy, Mid-Victorian, Anglo-Irish identity, Literature, Canon