

WE ARE THE MUSIC MAKERS

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

We Are The Music Makers is an ode to the ones who dream and create. It is a tribute to artists, poets, writers and musicians who shape the world through their art. The poem celebrates those who refuse to play by the book and create a world of their own, who, despite being misunderstood by people play a great role in shaping the age they live in and bestow their work for the posterity to keep.

Published in 1873, O'Shaughnessy's *The Ode*, also known by its first line *We Are The Music Makers* was featured in the collection of poems titled *Music and Moonlight* and is actually an ode of nine full stanzas. Arthur O'Shaughnessy was an Irish poet who was born in London in 1844. He worked at the British Museum as an entomologist and herpetologist, though his true love was poetry, and he spent countless nights bent over thick volumes, translating French literature and writing poetry. The first three of the nine stanzas have been frequently published under the title "We Are The Music Makers" and is more popular than the complete ode. The **three stanzas** are composed of **octets**, with the **first** and the **third** stanza following a **abababab** rhyme scheme and the **second stanza** following an **ababcdcd** rhyme scheme.

Far from being just a celebratory ode to the 'music makers', the poem also explores the **agency of art** in the lived experience of people and how **art affects the various aspects of society** ranging from **politics** to **religion**. Sparkling with exuberant optimism, this poem celebrates art, lauds the creative spirit and asserts that the dreamers of dreams have an active role to shape the age they live in. It doesn't limit itself to a particular form of art but **includes all the creative and artistic endeavors** pursued by humans. Providing a larger-than-life depiction of a segment of society which functions from its fringes (the artists, musicians, poets and such like), the **first stanza describes how this group of people who've opted out of the dictates of the society actually play an active role in shaping the world** despite being misunderstood and ignored.

The underlying theme of the poem is the appreciation of art. The poet encourages the readers to dream like artists who shape the world through their imaginative capabilities. The transformative power of art, the ability of the artists to cause changes and the timelessness of art are the major concerns in the poem.

It promotes a feeling of freedom in the sense that it encourages the reader to break free from the shackles of society. It is only when we are in perfect tune with ourselves that we can manifest magic. This poem is a celebration of the art and the artists on every platform. It is an ode of pure appreciation to the gifted artists who are brave enough to rebel against dull, unimaginative and monotonous existence. Though artists do not involve themselves in the mainstream society and prefer to stay aloof, their art still makes them the "movers and shakers" of the society. This poem clearly identifies the sacrifices these artists have

made to prove their loyalty to art and salutes them for their bravery and creativity. Art is a gift of God to this world and the artists are the promoter of this gift. Artists are the revolutionaries who have been inspiring millions for generations. They are the true leaders who lead every generation and bestow them with the gift of art. They arouse inspiration and the will to dream and help to escape from the clutches of the society and the bitter reality. The tone of the poem is predominantly that of appreciation and celebration. The poet celebrates the imaginative power of the artists by using which they are able to bring changes in the society. A song, a poem, a painting or any other work of art can arouse people's emotions, awaken their imaginative abilities and inspire them to rebel against a dull world. Art is not only capable of raising new empires through fantasies but is also competent in destruction. When everything is in ruins, it is art that survives. The tone changes from celebratory to that of distress as the poet highlights the sacrifices made by the artists for survival. They are eternally in search of a patron. However, the mood swiftly changes to that of elation as the contributions of the artists to the society are appreciated. The artists produce works that are beneficial for uplifting the society.

Class Assignments ...

1. **Why is the life of artists so full of difficulties?**

Answer Artists are creative people. They indulge in their forms of art purely driven by an inner urge, an inner voice. The emotion inside their minds finds expression in their artistic creations. This is true for writers, poets, musicians, painters, sculptors, and dancers. The more passionate they are, the better is their art. Seldom, we will find a top artist producing a spectacular piece of art for commercial profit. This singular absence of profit brings them much misery. The celebrated Dutch painter Van Gogh died a pauper because he couldn't sell a single piece of his work. Despite, such hardship, artists continue to do their work.

2. **Why are the artists called 'movers and shakers'?**

Answer Behind every momentous change in society in all lands and in all ages, there has been a driving force that galvanizes people behind a cause. This is why it is said that 'Pen is mightier than the sword.' Our national anthem was written by Tagore when the nation was seeking a rallying cry. Bankim Chandra wrote 'Vande Mataram' that rekindles our patriotic feelings. Victor Hugo's Les Miserables shook the conscience of French people that led to wholesale reform of their oppressive prison system. Countless such examples can be cited to show that artists have profoundly influenced human thinking in all ages across geographies. The liberal caring society we enjoy today wouldn't have been a reality, if the music makers wouldn't have tried to purge the society of its evils. This is why they are called the 'Movers and Shakers'.

Home Assignments.....

3. **How would you justify the artists being referred to 'world-forsakers and 'world-losers' and 'movers and shakers' at the same point of time?**

