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Music, A Motif in Modernism: An Examination of the Musical Design in "Four Quartets"

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The urge to be free from confinement characterized the modernist sensibility and many modernist writers attempted to transcend artistic disciplines. Crucially, the modernists' striving from restriction towards freedom was often seen in relation to music. Ezra Pound called for poets 'to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome', and many modernists often aspired towards the liberation they associated with 'the musical phrase'.[1] For example, Virginia Woolf's love for music led her to consider words in the same light as music.[2] Indeed, music was central to Woolf's writing and she believed that the writing of literature was 'nearly allied to the art of music'.[3] Moreover, music provided Woolf with much inspiration in experimenting with a new form for the novel, and it was music to which she aspired: 'It's music I want; to stimulate and suggest'.[4]

Evidently, then, the modernists were greatly preoccupied with music and Pound captured the significance of music to the modernist movement when he boldly stated:

> Poets who are not interested in music are, or become, bad poets. I would almost say that poets should never be too long out of touch with musicians. Poets who will not study music are defective.[5]

In this article I shall begin by considering the rise of musico-literary criticism within the context of literary modernism, and reflect on the plethora of criticism which engages in this type of interdisciplinarity. I shall then briefly consider the implications that the current critical climate has for the future of musico-literary criticism, before turning to a brief discussion of the influence of music on T. S. Eliot. Finally, I shall carry out a musico-literary examination of Eliot's *Four Quartets* (1943).

Given the urge of the modernist writers to explore music, perhaps it is unsurprising that modernist literature has been analysed increasingly in relation to music. The interdisciplinary comparisons between literature and music gathered considerable speed after Calvin Smith Brown's seminal study entitled *Music and Literature: A Comparison of the Arts* (1948), and it would seem that in recent critical debate, the drawing of analogies between music and literature has been steadily increasing. In *Literary Modernism and Musical Aesthetics: Pater, Pound, Joyce and Stein* (2001) Brad Bucknell elucidated each author's interest in music, both in terms of theory and practice. This was followed shortly by *Literature and Music* (2002) ed. by Michael J. Meyer, which contained a wide-ranging number of articles by various critics, including an investigation of Samuel Beckett's serialist music technique and Pound's *Cantos*.

Most significantly, the interdisciplinary approach to literary modernism, and more specifically the crossing of boundaries between the disciplines of music and literature, shows no sign of abating. Even more criticism displaying an interdisciplinary approach between music and literary modernism will be forthcoming in 2013, with a special issue of *Modernist Cultures* (ed. by David James and Nathan Waddell) entitled 'Musicality and Modernist Form' continuing this critical trend. Moreover, 2013 will also see the publication of the first full-length study investigating the influence of classical music on Virginia Woolf by Emma Sutton (entitled *Virginia Woolf and Classical Music*), which adds to the already extensive musico-literary criticism on Pound, Joyce and Eliot.[6]

Before I focus on my own exploration of *Four Quartets*, it is important to highlight in what ways my discussion is a response to the current climate of musico-literary criticism. Whilst music and literary modernism can be fruitfully compared, critics have often sought to draw direct parallels between a literary work and a specific musical composition.

The most common instance of this type of critical trend is in relation to the criticism of Eliot's *Four Quartets*. Indubitably, there has been an abundance of criticism which draws comparisons between *Four Quartets* and the string quartet form, especially with regard to Beethoven's Late String Quartets. The most notable attempts are Harvey Gross's article 'Music and the Analogue of Feeling: Notes on Eliot and Beethoven' (1959), Keith Alldritt's *Eliot's 'Four Quartets': Poetry as Chamber Music* (1978), and John Holloway's article entitled '*Four Quartets* and Beethoven's Last Quartets' in *The Fire and the Rose: New Essays*

on T. S. Eliot (1992). Moreover, in *T. S. Eliot's Orchestra: Critical Essays on Poetry and Music* (2000) there has been yet another contribution to this debate by David Barndollar, in the chapter entitled 'Movements in Time: *Four Quartets* and the Late String Quartets of Beethoven'. As well as drawing analogies with Beethoven's string quartets, there have also been comparisons between *Four Quartets* and Béla Bartók's string quartets, such as in Mildred Meyer Boaz's article entitled 'Aesthetic Alliances in Poetry and Music: T. S. Eliot's "Four Quartets" and "String Quartets" by Béla Bartók' (1979). Evidently we can see that musico-literary criticism has often merely led to critical mimicry. Equally, the musico-literary methodological approach within the context of modernist literary criticism has often been strikingly similar, with critics choosing to focus closely on drawing comparisons with specific musical forms and structures.

Undoubtedly, then, there has been a plethora of criticism regarding the musicality of *Four Quartets*, which has in turn resulted in various different interpretations. But ultimately, placing too much focus on musical compositions, structures and forms has often resulted in abstract and nebulous criticism. In addition, owing to the large body of criticism published on the connection between music and literary modernism, there have consequently been a number of disparate analyses. Musico-literary criticism, therefore, all too often leads to incongruent analyses.

Thus in this article any comparisons with music are centred firmly on the text. Moreover, I have proposed that rather than focusing on specific works of music, we should look more broadly at the concept of music when investigating it in

relation to literature. When carrying out a musico-literary analysis of a literary text, we should not feel bound to focus on specific musical compositions or forms as has become the critical tendency. Yet, at the same time, to ignore the critical debate completely would be equally short-sighted. Rather, as with the modernists, we should strive to 'make it new', [7] but be aware that in reality this striving for innovation will inevitably be grounded in the past.

In this respect, Eliot's 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' can provide us with a useful analogy. Like Eliot, as critics we should be aware that in many respects 'novelty is better than repetition'.[8] Yet Eliot's sense of tradition, or as Sarker calls it 'his awareness of the past', [9] is crucial to how we, as critics, should view previous criticism. As Eliot suggests: 'the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the presentness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones'.[10] According to Eliot: 'bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different' and so, as critics engaging in musico-literary criticism, we should strive to 'make it into something better, or at least different'.[11] This, of course, is no mean feat, and critics have certainly not underestimated the task of 'forging connections across the different disciplines',[12] far from it. As Albright establishes: 'The arts are an endless semblance, an endless dissembling – and a collaboration among several arts is at once a labyrinth and a thread that needs to be followed'.[13] Yet with the plethora of musico-literary criticism that exists, a new labyrinth of conflicting paths has been

created where the thread is in danger of being lost as a result of the wandering paths it can lead us down.

I shall now consider the influence of music on Eliot in more detail. Eliot often spoke in his criticism of the impact of music. For example, in 'Poetry and Drama' he speaks of 'a fringe of indefinite extent, of feeling which we can only detect, so to speak, out of the corner of the eye and can never completely focus'.[14] It is at these moments that he suggests: '… we touch the border of those feelings which only music can express'.[15] Furthermore, Eliot reinforced the influence of music on his poetry when he expressed a desire to write a '…poetry so transparent that we should not see the poetry'.[16] Indeed in this statement Eliot seemed to be aspiring to a complete purity, in which poetry 'stands naked in its bones' and merges with music into an absolute perfection.[17]

At first glance then, Eliot's views seem to coincide with Pater's famous statement in *The Renaissance*. As Perry Meisel elucidates: 'Music is, for the Arnoldean side of Pater, queen, exemplary because it is pure form, absolutely perfect since it is altogether without semantic content…'.[18] In fact, for Pater, music was the only means to create 'the ideal of unity' and 'exact a harmony of sound and sense'.[19] Yet ultimately Eliot tried to offer a more exact and definite statement than Pater's celebrated dictum. In 'The Music of Poetry' Eliot elucidated his own stance towards music within poetry: '… the music of poetry is not something which exists apart from the meaning. Otherwise, we could have poetry of great musical beauty which made no sense, and I have never come

across such poetry'.[20] Indeed Eliot is precise about how music should be incorporated into his poetry:

> My purpose here is to insist that a "musical poem" is a poem which has a musical pattern of sound and a musical pattern of the secondary meanings of the words which compose it, and that these two patterns are indissoluble and one… [21]

Certainly Eliot's ideal of interlinking sound patterns and linguistic meaning is far more concrete than the eloquent, but rather vague, notion of Pater's that art is: 'always striving to be independent of the mere intelligence, to become a matter of pure perception, to get rid of its responsibilities, to its subject or material…'. [22] Thus, as Brad Bucknell emphasizes, for Eliot: 'The music of poetry must be intelligible; it must be a part of what circumscribes the poem and allows it to create and express an ordered whole'. [23]

Aside from his own criticism, Eliot accentuates the importance of music in his work by constantly alluding to it in his titles. Thus from the earlier poetry of 'Nocturne', 'Preludes' and 'Rhapsody on a Windy Night' Eliot often hints towards music as the key to unlocking the complexities of his poetry. Furthermore, music features prominently within a number of his poems. Most notably, perhaps, in Eliot's ironic delineation of a Chopin recital and the lady's response to it in 'Portrait of a Lady':

> We have been, let us say, to hear the latest Pole
> Transmit the Preludes, through his hair and finger-tips.

> ‘So intimate, this Chopin, that I think his soul
> Should be resurrected only among friends
> Some two or three, who will not touch the bloom
> That is rubbed and questioned in the concert room.’ [24]

In stark contrast to the cultured Preludes of Chopin, Eliot then depicts an altogether different music:

> Among the windings of the violins
> And the ariettes
> Of cracked cornets
> Inside my brain a dull tom-tom begins
> Absurdly hammering a prelude of its own,
> Capricious monotone
> That is at least one definite ‘false note.’ [25]

Interestingly, Nicolosi posits that this passage mimics the ‘syncopated ragtime rhythms of the day’ which points to another musical aspect prevalent within Eliot’s verse: jazz rhythms.[26] Along with the jazz rhythms which are especially evident in *Sweeney Agonistes*, for example, there have also been a number of critics who have pointed to the influence of Wagner in *The Waste Land.* Moreover, the musical poetics of the French Symbolists have also been established as a significant influence on Eliot’s poetry.[27]

Yet perhaps the work of Eliot most inspired by music was *Four Quartets* and consequently it is the most interesting to explore with regard to music. Inevitably one must start with the title of the poem, which immediately evokes a musicality and specifically the musical design of string quartets. Indeed, as David Barndollar

aptly states: 'The poem's general title specifically invites the analogy, and understanding something about musical quartet forms can illuminate Eliot's purpose in structuring the poems as he does'.[28] However, Hugh Kenner offers the most insightful interpretation of the title, suggesting that: 'the title also implies that the deliverances of the poem will be as formal and as elusive as music, and that something resembling a strict form is going to be observed, as it is'.[29]

It was Beethoven's late quartets which were the most prominent influence on Eliot, and he was famously supposed to have stated in a lecture in 1933 that he tried 'to get beyond poetry, as Beethoven, in his later works, strove to get beyond music'.[30] Certainly a plethora of critics has often tried to suggest that there is a precise affinity between Eliot's *Four Quartets* and Beethoven's late string Quartets. Indeed Harvey Gross draws a number of likenesses between the *Four Quartets* and Beethoven's C Minor Quartet Opus 131, on account of the: 'great variety in mood and technical effect, and because its vast musical scheme offers a rich context of contrasting feeling'.[31] Furthermore, John Holloway asserts that there is a direct parallel between Eliot's *Four Quartets* and Beethoven's last quartets.[32]

Ultimately, however, as I suggested earlier, the parallels drawn with Beethoven's and Bartok's quartets are far too tenuous. Whilst Gross, Holloway and Boaz offer insightful interpretations of the *Four Quartets*, I feel it is erroneous to draw such a strong comparison with Beethoven's and Bartok's work. Indubitably it is important to remember, as Barndollar emphasizes, that whilst there are affinities between both music and poetry: 'poetic understanding and

musical understanding are essentially different things'.[33] As such it is misguided to read Eliot's poetry in relation to any specific musical work. Indeed, as Eliot stated: 'We can never emulate music, because to arrive at the condition of music would be the annihilation of poetry…'.[34] Yet equally I feel Gardner is somewhat misguided when she dismisses the importance of the sonata form: '…The analogy must not be taken too literally. Mr Eliot is not imitating "sonata form"'.[35] I am therefore taking a stance which I think amalgamates the seminal critical views regarding the *Four Quartets* and, in doing so, offers the best way to approach the poem.

Thus whilst I accept Eliot's poetry has definite relations to Beethoven's quartets, it is the basic structure and design of the sonata form more generally that is of most importance to an understanding of the *Four Quartets*. As D. Bosley Brotman suggests, the *Four Quartets* has 'the basic structure' of a string quartet and it is this structure which ensures a 'large framework' with which Eliot could cultivate and amplify his ideas.[36] Each section of the *Four Quartets* is split into five movements, as is often seen in musical compositions and this provides the framework for Eliot's ideas. But most importantly, as Bodelsen states: '…within each of these divisions, the themes are stated and modulated very much as in a movement in music'.[37] Certainly Eliot's meditative and philosophical poem can be considered in relation to the sonata-allegro form.[38]

The arrangement of the sonata-allegro form was one which enabled the development of frequently diverse and oppositional themes. A brief exploration of the sonata-allegro form will help us see more clearly the similarities between

Eliot's *Four Quartets* and the musical sonata form. Fundamentally it consists of three sections: the exposition, development and recapitulation.[39] In the exposition the key opposing themes are introduced and these themes are then advanced, elaborated and contrasted in the development section. Finally, in the recapitulation section, the subjects are stated again in a final fashion.[40] This emphasis on elaboration and recapitulation of themes has many resonances with *Four Quartets*. For instance, the first movement is divided into three sections: the first two divisions are based on the exposition and development of the themes, whilst the third recapitulates these. The second movement is split into a lyrical section followed by a section of prose; the third movement is based around an exploration of some theme already established; the fourth movement is lyrical.[41] Finally in the fifth movement there is a fixed direction or tendency towards some end.

This structure of beginning with a philosophical idea, which is then developed from a different angle, is in many ways directly linked to the process of thematic modulation in the musical sonata. Moreover, in the same way the sonata form '… is by no means a rigid compositional formula',[42] equally Eliot's *Four Quartets* has a fluidity. This smooth thematic development is what Eliot was pushing towards when in 'The Music of Poetry' he spoke of 'the development of a theme by different groups of instruments', and the use of 'contrapuntal arrangement of the subject-matter'.[43] The way in which he develops images by producing frequent variations on them and evoking their original contexts is most

reminiscent of the sonata form. In addition, these fragmentary images and themes occur in a manner similar to the notion of the motif.

I shall now explore the *Four Quartets* more thoroughly and in doing so highlight its musicality and how central the fragmentary motifs are to the design of the poem. Indeed, in many respects the influence of music can be seen in terms of the recurring motifs which unify the whole poem. Rather than drawing strict analogies with specific musical compositions or structures, focusing on motifs enables me to have the freedom to explore the issue of musicality, whilst concentrating on the text. In doing so I hope to create a clear path towards a better understanding of how figurative music works in the *Four Quartets*. After all, the purpose of musico-literary criticism should be to enlighten our understanding, or as Pound eloquently put it: 'The value of music as elucidation of verse comes from the attention it throws on to the detail'.[44]

The central themes in *Four Quartets* can be seen as history and time, redemption, and the progress through temporal mortality to immortality.[45] These themes and ideas recur throughout the poem and as in the sonata allegro form these motifs are developed and elaborated. Take, for example, the following lines in the last movement of 'Burnt Norton': 'And the end and the beginning were always there / Before the beginning and after the end'.[46] This idea of time is then recalled in the opening lines of 'East Coker': 'In my beginning is my end',[47] which is further developed at its close: 'In my end is my beginning'.[48] Moreover this is recapitulated in the final movement of 'Little Gidding': 'What we call the beginning is often the end / And to make an end is to make a beginning. / The end

is where we start from'. [49] In developing the initial phrase Eliot suggests that every moment is at once an end and a beginning. This idea is then developed further through images of the cyclical relationship of growth and decay: 'Houses rise and fall, crumble, are extended, / are removed, destroyed, restored'. [50] Thus Eliot is able to entwine the central themes into the poem through this continual development of motifs. In fact throughout the *Four Quartets* Eliot's themes and ideas are continually developed from each quartet to the next. [51] I suggest that the notion of recurring motifs in the *Four Quartets* is central to an understanding of the development of Eliot's ideas and images. Eliot himself seems to suggest that it is through constant reiteration and repetition that he is able to find his poetic voice: 'You say I am repeating / Something I have said before. I shall say it again. / Shall I say it again?'. [52]

Furthermore, as Jewel Spears Brooker highlights, it is the repetition and reiteration of images which creates a musical 'pattern' in *Four Quartets* and this pattern 'is both the main subject and major principle of form'. [53] However, whilst Brooker's point is a useful one I think it is nevertheless over-simplified. Repetition alone does not constitute a specific musical analogy. Rather it is through the repetition of ambiguous images and paradoxes that Eliot pushes towards music. Through a variety of 'mystical paradoxes' [54] he is able to break what in 'The Music of Poetry' he calls the 'frontiers of consciousness beyond which words fail, though meaning still exists'. [55] Scofield saw this pattern of repetition as a series of 'different voices, styles and verse forms'. [56] However, the musical analogy of the motif is equally rewarding if not more so.

'Burnt Norton' is the first movement of *Four Quartets* and immediately reinforces a musical analogy, as it adopts the use of contrasting themes in a manner distinctly similar to that of the motif.[57] Throughout 'Burnt Norton' there are images of time and movement and these merge with other aspects of *Four Quartets.* The references to movement take on many different forms. For example, there are the metaphors of movement contained within poetic phrases: 'Footfalls echo in the memory / Down the passage which we did not take'.[58] Next to such metaphorical references we have literal moments of movement: 'So we moved, and they, in a formal pattern, / Along the empty alley'.[59] This idea is then repeated in movement V : 'The detail of the pattern is movement, / As in the figure of the ten stairs'.[60] Thus in many ways these references to movement, both literal and metaphorical, act in a similar manner to musical motifs as they are repeated throughout movements in 'Burnt Norton'. In fact in the beginning of movement V the themes of music and movement are moulded into one, creating a progression that is on the way to an unattainable timelessness: 'Words move, music moves / Only in time; but that which is only living / Can only die. Words, after speech, reach / Into the silence'.[61] One of the major difficulties for Eliot in *Four Quartets* was finding a way in which to create '…the moment in and out of time'.[62] Ultimately in *Four Quartets* it is through the imitation of music that Eliot is able to capture '… the moment in and out of time' and manifest the inexpressible.[63] This moment is comprehensible in 'The Dry Salvages', in which Eliot mentions a music: '… heard so deeply / That it is not heard at all, but you are the music / While the music lasts'.[64]

Words themselves also become motifs which are gradually developed. Thus in the first movement of 'Burnt Norton' we can see the word 'past' frequently occurs, giving a musicality to Eliot's phrasing: 'Time present and time past / Are both perhaps present in time future, / And time future contained in time past'.[65] Similarly the word 'movement' can be seen as a fragmentary motif that recurs over and over again, creating a musical patterning. Thus line 25 repeats 'movement' at the beginning and end of the line, whilst there are small variations upon the theme of movement in the phrases 'Love is itself unmoving' and 'Even while the dust moves'.[66] Indeed the various motifs in movement V undergo constant change and variation. It is this sense of development that is central to the musical motif. For instance, in the end of movement V the image of the 'shaft of sunlight' evokes the previous motif of the pool 'filled with water out of sunlight' that was seen in movement I.[67] Similarly the notion of the 'dust' in movement V echoes the 'dust on a bowl of rose leaves' from movement I.[68]

Furthermore, in a format that mimics the sonata form, Eliot adopts a contrasting theme to the idea of movement. This antithesis to movement is specifically the notion of stillness which is also prevalent in part V of 'Burnt Norton'.[69] Once again this concept can be seen in terms of a motif as it is constantly developed and undergoes change. Thus if we look at an extract from movement V of 'Burnt Norton' we can see this process of transformation most clearly. Take, for instance, the phrase 'The stillness, as a Chinese jar still / Moves perpetually in its stillness'.[70] Here in the motif of stillness there is a gradual progression between 'stillness' and 'still'.[71]

Most significantly, not only are themes, concepts and ideas repeated and expanded upon within the sections of 'Burnt Norton', but throughout the poem as a whole. In fact, as Grover Smith established, 'Transitions between the "instrumental" passages of the *Quartets* and between whole movements are conspicuously musical'.[72] Thus in movement V of the final section, 'Little Gidding', Eliot recapitulates fragmentary motifs that are seen throughout *Four Quartets.* For instance, the image of the 'children in the apple-tree' [73] links back to the phrase 'the leaves were full of children' [74] which is also repeated later in 'Burnt Norton' in the form of '….the hidden laughter / Of children in the foliage'.[75] Moreover in the third movement of 'East Coker', Eliot begins 'O dark dark dark. They all go into the dark' and this acts as a motif that is recapitulated later on.[76] Indeed the phonetic sounds of 'd' evoke the phrase 'Dung and death' [77] in the first movement, and this phrase itself is recalled in the third movement, in the phrase 'Of death and birth'.[78] The reiteration of the theme of death is then seen in the fifth movement, with the fragmentary motif of 'Through the dark cold and the empty desolation'.[79]

Along with the images of darkness, images of the rose and of smoke interlink 'Burnt Norton' and 'East Coker' and are subject to constant repetition and recapitulation. Thus in the second movement of 'East Coker', the question 'Late roses filled with early snow?' [80] evidently evokes the image of the rose-garden in the first two movements of 'Burnt Norton': 'Towards the door we never opened, Into the rose-garden'.[81] Similarly the notion of fire-smoke is seen in movement II of 'East Coker' where there is the figure of 'destructive fire / Which burns…',[82]

and this is recalled in relation to the end of movement II of 'Burnt Norton', in the image of '… the draughty church at smokefall'.[83]

The theme of fire is of particular importance as it provides coherence in sections I and II of 'Little Gidding'. Indeed as with musical motifs, the recurring motif of fire provides a unity to 'Little Gidding'. Furthermore, the fire symbol is one of the 'mystical paradoxes' [84] which Eliot repeats in order to give a musicality to the design of *Four Quartets.* Thus whilst fire is seen as a destructive force: 'Consumed by either fire or fire',[85] it is also a means to absolve and expurgate sins. This is reinforced symbolically by linking the devastation of aerial warfare to the Holy Spirit. Through the assimilation of the image of planes on fire with the religious tongues of fire which appeared at Jesus' baptism, fire is seen as providing us with two alternatives: death or salvation. Most interestingly, Eliot unfolds these contrasting ideas within the final lines of each stanza in a manner similar to a musical motif. Thus, 'To be redeemed from fire by fire' is developed into the second instance of 'Consumed by either fire or fire'.[86] Likewise Eliot refers to a plane as a 'flickering tongue';[87] whilst he creates another image of one alight with flames falling in 'incandescent terror'.[88] By developing these motifs Eliot reinforces that redemption can only come through suffering. This is reiterated by merging the images of destruction and growth into one in the last line of 'Little Gidding'[89]: 'And the fire and the rose are one'.[90] Certainly Eliot's use of 'the music of imagery' is most apparent in the close of 'Little Gidding'.[91] Through the musical interlinking of images of fire, Eliot is able to offer a pattern of concluding images.[92] Ultimately Eliot suggests that whilst fire may be seen as

ruinous, the annihilation it causes can be seen as allowing for a new life to form. Indeed, we are able to change the fire from being a source of despair to that of delight once we identify ourselves with its source. Thus, as Eliot underlines, the fire's origin is God's all-encompassing love: 'Who then devised the torment? Love. / Love is the unfamiliar Name…'. [93]

Evidently the recurring motifs of the *Four Quartets* can be seen as being framed loosely around the format of the sonata-allegro, whereby they often recur in a process of exposition, development and recapitulation. Eliot's *Four Quartets*, in a similar manner to the notion of the motif and sonata-allegro form, focus on thematic ideas; develop these; and then return to the first ideas which have been altered. This premise of 'departure and return' [94] is central to the *Four Quartets*. Certainly in every section of the *Four Quartets*, Eliot moves away from ideas to return to them again. Indeed Eliot builds up contrasts between opposing themes, and the fragmentary motifs and images of *Four Quartets* are moulded together to link the quartets. For instance, in the opening to 'Little Gidding', we are presented with a series of opposites such as 'Midwinter spring is its own season' and 'between melting and freezing…'.[95] The movement then goes on to portray a journey that does not change: 'It would be the same at the end of the journey'. [96] The end of this movement is finally terminated with the phrase: 'Here, the intersection of the timeless moment / Is England and nowhere. Never and always'. [97] Thus at this point the juxtaposition of opposites in the form of 'timeless moment' [98] is still in place, but it collides with the concept of the journey that occurs in this section of 'Little Gidding'.

Ultimately, a detailed analysis of the *Four Quartets* allows us to see just how penetrating the notion of music is within it. Themes and ideas resound throughout Eliot's poem through an analogy of exposition, development and recapitulation. Moreover the way these interlink and develop throughout the poem can be seen in terms of motifs. As a result the ideas and themes in T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* have a recurring musicality to them. Indeed, the musical development of motifs recurs throughout whereby they are repeated and altered, making the poem a coherent unity. Through the subtlety and intricacy of the recurring motif Eliot is able to imbue the ineffable splendour of the *Four Quartets* with depth and meaning, and in doing so he achieves a music of poetry.

In using motifs as a way to discuss the figurative music of the *Four Quartets*, I have elucidated the way in which Eliot used figurative music and, in doing so, highlighted how we can use musical terms to enhance our understanding of the way in which music influenced modernist literature. Whilst musico-literary criticism should ensure critics have freedom to cross boundaries, we must remember that our focus ought to remain on the text as literature. Moreover, comparisons and analogies with music should be used in order to enhance our understanding of the text: they should not lead us further away from it. Certainly, the drawing of analogies between music and literature has been a recurring preoccupation in modernist literary criticism, and long may this continue. But, as critics, we need to think carefully about the ways in which we develop the already existing expertise. I have illustrated that musico-literary criticism remains a challenging, but ultimately rewarding, means to investigate literary modernism.

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