

A Note on Music and Form in T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets**

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May I join the dialogue on T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*? I should like to offer a brief note on one aspect, or reverberation, of the form and sense of music adumbrated by Prof. Inge Leimberg. Eliot, to repeat—one of Eliot's favourite *re* words and practices—"had, of course, been concerned with places and musical analogies from the very beginning" (63).

Many years ago I called attention to Guillaume de Machaut's canonically written rondeau, 'Ma fin est mon commencement / et mon commencement ma fin,' which is a more powerfully evocative representation of the concept that the embroidered words on Mary, Queen of Scot's chair, picturesque though that legend is—and, if it be true, then (as I argued in 1948), doubtless Ronsard was the intermediary between Mary and Machaut (R. J. Schoeck, "Queen Mary and Machaut," *Modern Language Review* 63 [1948]: 187-88).

Throughout the beautifully wrought quartet structures of Eliot's poem there is the sense of beginning and end, and I would urge once more that we give attention to Machaut's rondeau. Asked about Machaut, Eliot (as indicated in my earlier note) replied that he was always glad to find that he had been anticipated: a posture, or principle, which bears out of Prof. Leimberg's reading.

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*Reference: Inge Leimberg, "The Place Revisited in T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*," *Connotations* 8.1 (1998/99): 63-92.