

'T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* as Quartets: Four Voices in the Conversation of Mankind', by Martin Warner, *Journal of the T.S. Eliot Society (UK)*, 3, 2011, pp. 47-70

*Abstract*

Goethe compared the Quartet form to a conversation between four voices, and Michael Oakeshott wrote of 'the voice of poetry' as contributing to 'the conversation of mankind', a conversation in which 'different universes of discourse meet, acknowledge each other, and enjoy an oblique relationship which neither requires nor forecasts their being assimilated to one another'. This essay proposes a reading of *Four Quartets* in which the voices of (relatively untheorized) experience, of (self-conscious) poetry, of philosophy, and of religion may be construed as carrying out such a conversation, in the light of the conception of philosophical poetic structure Eliot learnt from Valéry.