

Helen Gardner (The Art of T.S. Eliot)

Helen Gardner (*The Art of T. S. Eliot*, 1949) presents Eliot's emphasis on rhythm as part of what he calls Auditory Imagination. Dame Helen presents his patterns of stress in the Quartets in the following way.

The basic rhythm, the one that the verse returns to regularly, involves four stresses to a line, with a strong pause midline. Eliot keeps the line from becoming monotonous by occasionally varying the number of stresses per line, as in the third line below, with five stresses, or the line farther down the page with three stresses. But in this first section of "Burnt Norton" the pattern always returns to the basic four stresses.

Time present / and time past

Are **both** perhaps **present** / in **time** future,
And **time** future / contained in **time** past.

Footfalls **echo** in the **memory**

Down the **passage** / which we **did** not **take**

Towards the **door** / we **never** opened.

But will from time to time cast a section of the poem in a different stress pattern, changing the emotional impact. In the second part of the fifth section, the basic pattern becomes three stresses, again with variations.

The **detail** of the **pattern** is **movement**,

As in the **figure** of the **ten** stairs.

Desire **itself** is **movement**

Not in **itself** desirable;

Love is **itself** **unmoving**,

Only the **cause** and **end** of **movement**,

Timeless, and undesiring

Except in the **aspect** of **time...**

In the second half of the second movement Eliot moves to a longer line of six stresses.

At the **still point** of the **turning world** / Neither **flesh** nor **fleshless**;

Neither from nor **towards**; / at the **still point, there** the **dance** is,

But **neither arrest** nor **movement**. / And **do** not **call** it **fixity**,

Where **past** and **future** are **gathered**. / Neither **movement** from nor

Towards...