

The wasteland literature review examples

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



“ The Burial of the Dead.”

Eliot begins “ The Wasteland with the section named, “ The Burial of the Dead.” The central theme has been declared, via the title, before the stanzas begin. There is a fine line between life and death; life can come from death, and life also forces death. This is particularly evident in the final stanza:

“ That corpse you planted last year in your garden, / Has it begun to sprout?
Will it bloom this year? / Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?” Eliot’s idea is of a dilapidated place occupied by people who suffer in an in-between condition, rather like a limbo: they live, but in as much as they appear to not feel anything and do not aim for anything, they are dead. Eliot is known for his philosophy that it could, in fact, be preferable to do evil than to do nothing. In other words, carrying out an action of some kind at least confirms a person’s existence.

Question: What role does the seasons have in this section?

“ A Game of Chess”

The two women in this part symbolise the two sides of contemporary sexuality: one side is a dry, infertile exchange, attached to obsession and self-destruction, while the second side is a wild fertility linked to an absence of culture and fast aging. The first woman is an unfulfilled, emotive but not intelligent person. She is ominous and is bounded by “ strange synthetic perfumes.” She is associated with Dido and Cleopatra, two women who killed themselves as a result of unfulfilled love. This link implies her senselessness.

Perhaps the most memorable part of this section is the final stanza in which two Cockney women are chatting in a pub when the barman is trying to close; this explains the recurrent statement: “ HURRY UP PLEASE IT’S TIME.”

Question: What does the “ Game of Chess” signify?