**THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD (FROM THE WASTE LAND)**

**1. COMPREHENSION**

1.

1. It’s winter (l.2) and it’s 9 o’clock (l.9), that is the hour when people go to work in the offices

2. The setting is London, we know that because Eliot speaks about the London Bridge and other famous buildings or streets of London. The city (the centre of London) is the financial district where there are banks, offices, important companies and where Londoners go to work

3. Londoners

4. Stetson

2.

1. The office workers are linked to the idea of death in line 4 through a quotation from Dante’s Inferno (where dead are described). They can’t communicate to each other: they walk looking down (l.6), they don’t look around or at each other and they don’t speak. They are alone even if they are in a crowd and they behave like walking dead. They are anonymous and they represent the alienation of the modern man.

2. Stetson is probably a veteran of the first world war and he represents the present. The poet recognizes him because he fought in the war, too.

3-4. Eliot refers to the first world war only indirectly, speaking about the Punic wars. In this way he wants to suggest that all wars are equal.

5-6. In line 12 the poet speaks about a corpse that was buried. The burial of a dead person is usually an important event for every culture and it’s often a religious event, with a funeral and many people. However, here it has become a simple activity of gardening because even death has lost its meaning.

The sprouting corpse seems a parody of Brooke’s image of the foreign field where the dead soldier will be buried. Here the idea of heroism, glory and immortality in Brooke’s poem is replaced by prosaic gardening because heroism is no longer possible in modern times

7. The Dog (with capital letter) is probably an ancient divinity.

8. The last sentence is a quotation from “Les fleurs du mal” (The flowers of evil) by Baudelaire: Eliot speaks directly to the reader and he says that they are equal, they are both hypocrites and they live in the same alienated society. In this text there are a lot of quotations, for example from Dante, Baudelaire and so on. Eliot had an excellent education, he read and knew a lot of literary works and foreign cultures and he used this knowledge in his works. Eliot refers to masterpieces of the past because he wants to underline the difference between the past (which was meaningful and fertile) and the present, which is meaningless and sterile.

**ANALYSIS**

3.

1. This text doesn’t have a regular rhyme scheme or a traditional metre.

2. There isn’t a classical division in stanzas and the length of the lines is different (for ex. the first line has only 2 words)

3. There are alliterations, for ex. lines 6, 10 and 11

4. Eliot uses free verse

4.

Eliot uses some words related to death (death, l. 4, dead sound, l.9, corpse, l.12) to suggest the idea of the spiritual death of the modern society. He repeats the words “So many” (l. 3-4) and “flowed” (l. 3 and 7) twice to suggest the automatic movements of an indifferent and alienated mass of people.

6.

Even if Eliot describes the setting in a realistic and detailed way (9 o’clock, winter, he speaks about many famous buildings of London), the City is defined “unreal” because the people can’t speak to each other and they look like living dead. Everything is silent, there are only a few sighs sometimes. The sensation of unreality is increased by the brown fog (l. 2). **OBJECTIVE CORRELATIVE:** All the different images (winter dawn, sighs, the repetition of “dead” and “flowed”, the corpse) give an idea of sadness and alienation and they represent the alienation and the sterility of the present compared to a mythical past.