Annotated Bibliography


The main point of this article is to introduce some new, “green” alternatives to traditional burial for the disposal of corpses. The author claims that methods for making burial more eco-friendly are becoming more popular and are quickly changing the “death-care” business. This article provides me with information on some very sensible alternatives to traditional in-ground burial, as well as outlining their benefits. It also contains some very useful facts regarding waste and environmental damage to support both the ethos and logos appeals of my argument.


This article examines the Catholic Church’s argument in favor of burial and in opposition to cremation as an alternative for burial. The author, an adjunct faculty member at Mundelein Seminary and former chair of the Chicago Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, claims that the Church’s belief in the resurrection of the body necessitates the preparation and burial of an intact body that awaits resurrection. This essay refutes my claims that burial is not the optimal method for the disposal of a body and that the physical body needs not be maintained after the person has died. While I do not agree with the viewpoint of the author, his argument is probably one of the most important and commonly espoused oppositions to my stance on the topic and is therefore crucial to my paper.


The author of this article suggests that people are increasingly finding ways to use modern convenience and technology to avoid dealing with contact with actual dead and dying people. He points out that while death has never been discussed more in a theoretical sense or portrayed more often in entertainment, people are increasingly reluctant to allow the realities of death and dying into their lives. This article supports one of the primary claims of my paper, which is that people are uncomfortable accepting death as an inevitable end to our inhabitation of our mortal bodies. The author also briefly suggests a few possible consequences to this trend, which may further feed the unwillingness of people to approach the topic of death with reason instead of emotion.
This article is a very informative piece concerning the different ways in which different cultures and religious groups deal with the disposal of the bodies of the deceased. The author’s thesis is that these different rites and rituals reflect the views those cultures have of their world. This article actually supports my argument in two different ways. Firstly, it allows the reader to recognize the traditional American burial is not a universal given, but simply one of a number of age-old methods of disposing of the dead. Secondly, the text discusses why different groups of people see death and the disposal of corpses the ways that they do. This is essential to my paper because it focuses on our motivations for the methods of disposal that we choose.


In this article, the author reviews the progression of funerals and burials from something overly sentimental and gaudy to something that he feels is now beginning to lack the necessary respect and attention. His conclusion is that a decreasing memorialization of the dead in our culture will have a negative impact on future generations. This conclusion obviously runs in opposition to my paper, as I am arguing against the continuation of traditional burial. However, it offers a point of view for which I’ve been looking by suggesting the possible effects of doing away with the rites and rituals. Additionally, the text provides some useful information regarding the overly sentimental focus on the ceremony surrounding burial as well as the cost and effort we’ve been willing to extend for it.