

Analyze fitzgeralds presentation of the valley of ashes.

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Analyze Fitzgerald's presentation of the Valley of Ashes at the start of chapter 2. Halfway between West Egg and New York lies the 'valley of ashes' and this is the 'desolate' wasteland, which is also home to the Wilson family. The term 'desolate' is used to describe a place that is depressingly empty and solitary. Fitzgerald includes this 'fantastic farm' to emphasize to the readers, the sharp contrast between luxury and health with poverty and struggle. The valley serves to represent the damage that the upper class characters such as Daisy and Tom can inflict on society.

Through the Wilson family, we get the impression that this is a place where the victims of the American Dream reside and is home to those who have very little to look forward to in the future and have very little going on in their lives. Unlike New York, this barren site lacks extravagance and the repetition of the color 'grey' which like black, can be used to signify a lack of life, as well as loss or depression serves to remind us of the emptiness Fitzgerald is trying to portray - even the men who work there are 'ash-grey'.

The Valley is a product of capitalism as it is created by industrial waste and can be seen as the dumping ground for the likes of wealthy men and women. The wealthy reside in false pretence where their homes are reflective of gold but down the 'motor-road' we can find the valley of their corruptive wealth. It is the complete opposite of life in the West Egg and in New York. Transferred epithet as well as personification is used when describing the movement of the cars. It is said that even the cars 'crawl' and once again, this stresses to the readers the emptiness in the valley.

Up until this juncture, Fitzgerald uses cars as a symbol of power and along with power tends to come wealth. For all the wealthy characters in the novel such as Gatsby and the Buchanans, a car comes along with the lavish lifestyles they lead, but if you compare this to the Wilsons, they fix cars just in order to make a living. It's as if to those that live in New York, it's just a good time but for those in the valley of ashes, this is what they call life. It is evident that everything here is devalued and amounts to nothing in New York.

In the valley of Ashes, we also have the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg that sees everything. Although it is just a billboard, it could be argued that through these 'yellow spectacles' are the eyes of God as well as the eyes of Nick. He is our narrator who is within and without the novel. We see the narration through his eyes but by doing so, Fitzgerald is able to withhold information from the readers as we can only see what Nick chooses to reveal in his narrative as he judges everyone else from his own perspective.

The eyes also serve to represent the harsh reality of the 'American Dream' and just how false it can be. Supposedly, anyone can make it big in America if they work hard for it, just like the Wilsons, but the truth is not everyone can be as wealthy as Gatsby and the Buchanans and the idea that everyone can live that American dream is just a dream. Although it has proved wealth for some, like the ashes, the Wilsons hope for this wealth are not very alive.