Discuss how Andy Mulligan represents the divide between the rich and the poor in the novel ‘TRASH’.

Andy Mulligan represents the divide between those living in poverty and luxury, using detailed explanations to questions like “What does education mean to the fortunate and the less fortunate?” “How do both upper class and lower class treat the dead and on the verge of death?” and “Why do the rich and the poor dress like they do?”

“Raphael looked at me, and I wondered if he was thinking that obvious thought: And what use is an education to me?” pg.54 People at Behala can’t afford to educate themselves or their relatives and family. If they did get a funded education, it would be of no use because even though they would have new knowledge and skills, they could not use it to help sift through trash. If they had a new job they would have to earn enough to make a living with a new lifestyle in the city. People look down on those who are poor at Behala and would not employ them due to the rich people’s and government outlook on them.

“Like those kids, we had our school bags. They carried books; we carried dollars.” pg. 202
Rich people in the book can afford to send relatives to school and get an education, they will most likely be employed as those in the city who are rich are looked after financially, the rich are also considered righteous and are treated fairly. Like the quote the school children will use their books (education) to make a living (money etc.), as the poor will use their money from what they find to make a living. In short, Andy Mulligan shows that with education, Rich people are better entitled to get an education then poor people as most poor people are not freely entitled to it and cannot afford it.

“and everyone knows some of those poor souls are still down there, down with the trash, turned into trash, rotting with the trash.” pg.22 In Trash, the poor starve to death, get thrown in with the trash when they die or caught underneath it for example when Smoky Mountain collapsed and are buried in concrete boxes, the most luxurious and expensive way to be remembered. Although that luxury can be taken away very easily and anyone can tamper with the graves in the cemetery and depending on how well made the graves are, they can fade.

“The wall divides the rich quarter, where the dead get buried in earth” pg.180
The rich can easily afford to have their loved ones buried safe and sound, and remembered, not forgotten like the poor. Lastly, Andy Mulligan implies that the poor don’t have much of a choice on how they are remembered and can’t give their loved ones what they would like and the rich have what they want, when they want with their money and power in terms of death.

“The kids round here, half the stuff we wear is what we found, but most we pile up, weigh and sell.” pg.5 Those living in poverty at Behala find the clothes they use or wear and need them for warmth and covering. Raphael explains that the poor can make money from their clothes if desperate for money and they are often dirty or torn after working. Raphael described that his jeans were hacked off and his t-shirt was too big. Olivia took Gardo shopping to buy new clothes for him because the clothing he was wearing was too dirty, to leave an impression that he was not a dumpsite boy when they were visiting the prison. The wealthy wear clothes that are clean, a perfect/near perfect fit and not defect/faulty clothes. Andy Mulligan demonstrates that the rich take clothes for granted, but these clothes sometimes end up with the poor and aid them.

The author cleverly and descriptively indicates the divide between the rich and the poor through his writing. The topics featured in Trash showing the difference in their education, how they treat their dead and their clothing.