

Essay on mixed media analysis who is dependent on welfare

[Sociology](#), [Poverty](#)



In the Youtube video from GlobalPOV, “ Who Is Dependent on Welfare?”, professor Ananya Roy and illustrator Abby Vanmuijen use a mixed methods approach to discuss the issues of welfare, economic inequality, and the way government subsidies really work. Roy speaks, and Vanmuijen sketches on a sketchpad, using innovative techniques of color and art to convey the broader ideas that Roy is talking about, point by point, using a time-lapse method to make the presentation in time with the speech. This results in an extremely effective presentation that conveys its ideas and agenda clearly and efficiently, while also understanding its audience.

The issue of welfare in the United States has long been a divided and complicated one; this video attempts to debunk the ideas of the “ welfare queen” and establish that it is, in fact, the rich who are more dependent on welfare than the lower-class, despite what popular media would have you say. For the most part, I came into the video agreeing with the topic being presented; I understand that welfare should not be vilified as it usually is, and that the rich have an overwhelming capacity for wealth over the poor – to an unequal level. What I did not realize was the extent to which that wealth was dependent on government subsidies and corporate “ welfare,” as the video points out.

For the most part, it is clear that the creators of the text are appealing to sympathetic members of the community, with the possibility of catering to neutral audiences as well. The video itself touts itself as a call to action for interested citizens (already young people likely interested in political activism) to channel their efforts toward these ends. The presentation uses flashy animation and stop-motion live-action drawings to simplify the

arguments being made (M&Ms are used to convey how much more government money the rich get than the poor, etc.), which is both gratifying to the supportive audience and enlightening to the neutral one. Resistant audiences might find the approach twee or oversimplified, and so it might not be incredibly persuasive. However, this may also be due to the deeply-entrenched opinions that surround this issue in the first place.

At the end of the video, the creators want you to reevaluate the idea of the ‘welfare queen,’ understand its true origins and who really benefits from government handouts, and to call for action to make changes to the way they think about welfare. Roy uses a great deal of personal experience with her students, telling stories about what their misconceptions are, and incorporating art and literature from people like Maya Angelou to convey political points about the role of welfare for the poor. She also uses the pronoun “our” frequently to involve the listener in her narrative, to assume their cooperation and agreement. The use of such quirky, unconventional visual aids is meant to appeal to the artists who watch the video – usually young, already liberally-minded people – and clearly illustrate that the rich get more than the poor do in government subsidies. The switch to live-action video for the Wal-mart story makes it seem ripped from the headlines, and ties the conceptual work of the presenters with current events. This makes the need for action even more urgent, and the idea of revolution much more romantic. It is through these methods that GlobalPOV’s video is an effective and persuasive video.

Works Cited

Roy, Ananya. “ Who is Dependent on Welfare?” Global POV. 2012.

< <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-rtySUhuokM>>.