

Ajay, Callum and Bruce English

The photograph, 'Life in Agbogbloshie' by Kai Löffelbein, utilises symbolism and composition, including props, clothing and background to represent the human experience of survival, endurance and suffering for those trapped within poverty. Setting is used to symbolise the struggle of a life in poverty. The general state of disrepair seen in the debris scattered on the ground as well as the harsh ash cloud ballooning upwards not only depicts the poor living conditions of the setting, it also conveys a feeling of guilt within the audience. This is achieved by using the harsh, almost oppressive feeling conveyed by the disorder of the environment. This creates a sense of empathy within the audience, imagining the problems and trials the boy has to endure everyday within this environment of poverty. Contrast is used to great effect within the image to highlight the injustice of the vast difference of living conditions between the middle to upper class and those in poverty. The boy is wearing a Barcelona Football Club shirt and shorts, a highly paid soccer team from a first-world country. The branded clothing contrasts the rest of the image, with the setting being dull and oppressive, standing out against the colourful shirt the boy is wearing. This further shows the disparity between higher income countries and those in poverty. Showing some of the shame and desire those in poverty can feel for their situation.

The use of props, clothing and background is used to represent the human experience of poverty. The subject in the image holds a monitor from the e-dump. The monitor, despite being thrown away, is still valued by the subject, evident through how they hold it with care above their head, treating it like treasure. It represents how the poor are forced to rely on other people's scraps. The things we treat as trash are treated with such value by the poor highlighting how poor their living conditions are. In poverty, people must rely on whatever they can get their hands on and must make use of whatever they can find, forcing them to scavenge in trash heaps to make ends meet. The subject in the image can be seen to be barefoot. Shoes are common clothing in society and seeing the subject without shoes highlights how the subject lives in extreme poverty, unable to provide basic essentials. Being barefoot is connotated with poverty as shoes are an essential part of many of our lives. These people living in extreme poverty are unable to even obtain something society normally takes for granted highlights the disparity between those in poverty and the rest of society. The background of the image highlights the poor living conditions and suffering found within poverty. Rather than a typical blue sky, the sky in the image is filled with dark smoke. The lack of a clear sky makes evident the poor quality of life experienced by the citizens in the area. If they can't even access clean air, how will they access proper food, water and shelter? The trash from the e-dump can be seen sprawling into the background. This further portrays the poor conditions the people in the area live in.