This topic somehow manages to avoid any sort of junk food in their experiment, and food preparation was not difficult enough to deter them. This proves that poor people are poor because they are less intelligent: they don’t know how to manage their diet in the best possible way, and they probably wouldn’t need to survive on a dollar a day if they were smart enough to get better-paying jobs. [...] It would be in everyone’s best interest if natural selection took its course; let the obese people be weeded out, let them die.

**POVERTY**

A concept referring to characteristics, behaviors, and attitudes which are frequently attached to poverty but which are not necessarily or exclusively connected to poverty as an economic condition and its closely related socioeconomic aspects.

**FATNESS**

Functions as a cultural category including judgments and attached characteristics concerning people who are considered as overweight, obese, or fat. I am interested in poorness and fatness as the social perceptions and stigmatized dimensions of poverty and obesity, and in how the poor and obese are represented within discourse and especially in cultural text, in literature, film, and television.

**SAME SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE DISCOURSES ON THE POOR & THE OBSESE**

At the intersection of the discourses on the poor and on the obese several similarities come together. These similarities strengthen the connection between poorness and fatness and thus facilitate the construction of a merged logic of the stereotypical image of the Fat Poor.

**WEIGHT LOSS SHOWS**

This chapter discusses contemporary weight loss shows like The Biggest Loser (since 2004) and their merchandise products.

**FAT POOR WELFARE MOTHERS**

This chapter looks at the novel Push (1994) and its movie adaptation Precious (2009) and the texts’ use of Fat Poor.

**FAT POOR WHITE TRASH**

In several audiovisual texts Fat Poor White Trash characters are featured as minor figures, as in the movie Winter’s Bone (2010).

**CASE STUDIES ON FAT POOR**

Both Push and Precious employ the image of the Fat Poor in their portrayal of the protagonists Precious and her mother Mary, two poor, African-American women living in Harlem in the late 1980s.

The texts combine Fat Poor with older stereotypes about poor, non-white women, such as the Welfare Mother and the Welfare Queen. The analysis focuses on the use of these stereotypes and the texts’ discussion of the success narrative. The chapter furthermore addresses questions of ethnicity, gender, and motherhood, and it explores the texts’ complex – stereotypical and yet critical – portrayal of the poor.

**DISCLAIMER**

This dissertation project is not about real connections between poverty and obesity. It is about culturally constructed connections between being poor and being obese and it is about prejudices, representations, stereotypes, and cultural perceptions of the poor.