

# “Romanticizing Poverty” Provides Legitimacy to Social Inequality

By [Global Research News](#)

Global Research, October 21, 2013  
[socialworkdegreecenter.com](http://socialworkdegreecenter.com)

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Poverty & Social Inequality](#)

**by Claire Quiney**

*How pop culture and Hollywood portray a working poor life as uncomplicated, void of stress, pure, and moral.*

*Working poor is not a lifestyle choice:*

...

# Romanticizing POVERTY

How pop culture portrays a working poor life as uncomplicated, void of stress, pure, and moral.

## WE'RE OVERSIMPLIFYING Movie Portrayals of Poverty

deeply moralistic and contented



$$\Gamma^2(p_1 \rightarrow p_2, z) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{d^n (f_2 - f_1)}{z^n (1 - z)^{n+1}}$$

GOOD WILL HUNTING

in need of assistance from wealthy

often white, character from higher socioeconomic status



THE DARK KNIGHT RISES

REALITY

very few working poor actually fit one or another of these stereotypes

## in pop-culture and fashion

Bohemian [BOHO]

pushes aside capitalist framework and stability for what they are passionate about.

Bourgeois-Bohemian [BOBO]

mimic the daily "simplicity of working poor, without giving up financial stability."



Urban Outfitters is for the "upscale homeless."

- Dick Haynes, President and Founder, Urban Outfitters

"Bitching & Junkfood Algardi Velvet Swing Dress"

by Urban Outfitters

\$144



## live below the line



The "live below the line" campaign challenged participants to live below Canada's poverty line

**\$1.75 a day FOR 5 DAYS...**

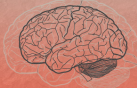
With the knowledge they can return to overblown savings accounts.

## we think of working poor as a destination

it's exotic, but that stage wears off

poverty shrinks your brain from chronic stress

Long term stress shrinks the prefrontal cortex, insular cortex, and subgenual anterior cingulate regions. All of which affect reasoning, decision making, emotions, and self-control.



poverty has the highest correlations to substance abuse, broken homes, violence, and health problems



For every 1 child abused in a house making >\$30,000



22 are abused in houses making <\$15,000



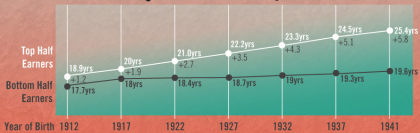
Those with only a high school education are 12% likelier to commit violent crimes.



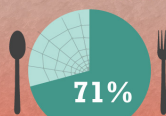
For every one child who is stunted, or in the hospital, twice as many impoverished children suffer from the same conditions.

## those living in poverty die earlier

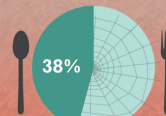
# of years left to live at age 60



## for many it never ends



71% of children whose parents were born in the lower half of income distribution are upwardly mobile, but not by much.



Only 38% of people born into the lower half of income distribution make it to the upper half.

Romanticizing poverty makes people think it doesn't need to change.

brought to you by [www.socialworkdegreecenter.com](http://www.socialworkdegreecenter.com)

Source: [Socialworkdegreecenter.com](http://Socialworkdegreecenter.com)

## **Romanticizing Poverty**

**How pop culture portrays a working poor life as uncomplicated, void of stress, pure, and moral.**

Working poor is not a lifestyle choice:

Job promotions and performance reviews[1]

Or

Simple routine and morality

### **We're oversimplifying.**

Movie Portrayals of Poverty:

1.) Deeply moralistic and contented:

*Beasts of the Southern Wild, Slumdog Millionaire, The Son, Good Will Hunting*[1]

2.) In need of assistance from a wealthy—often white—character from higher socioeconomic status:

*The Help, The Soloist, The Dark Knight Rises*

In pop-culture and fashion:

Bohemian: pushes aside capitalist framework and stability for what they are passionate about.[1]

Bourgeois-Bohemian: mimic the daily “simplicity of working poor, without giving up financial stability.

Dick Haynes, President and Founder, Urban Outfitters:[1]

Urban Outfitters is for the “upscale homeless.”

Nothing says homeless like the \$144 “Bitching & Junkfood Algardi Velvet Swing Dress”[2]

The “live below the line” campaign challenged participants to live below Canada’s poverty line (\$1.75 a day)[1]

FOR 5 DAYS...

With the knowledge they can return to overblown savings accounts.

### **We think of working poor as a destination. It's exotic. But that stage wears off.**

1.) Poverty shrinks your brain from chronic stress:

Long term stress shrinks the prefrontal cortex[8], insular cortex, and subgenual anterior cingulate[9] regions.[7]

All of which affect reasoning, decision making, emotions, and self-control.

So... you're deeper in the hole.

2.) It has the highest correlations to substance abuse, broken homes, violence, and health problems

For every 1 child abused in a house making >\$30,000:[5]  
22 are abused in houses making <\$15,000

Those with only a high school education 12% likelier to commit violent crimes.[6]

For every one child who is stunted, or in the hospital, twice as many impoverished children suffer from the same conditions.[10]

3.) Those living in poverty die earlier.

4.) And for many it never ends (it's cyclical):

71% of children whose parents were born in the lower half of income distribution are upwardly mobile, but by much.[4]

Only 38% of people born into the lower half of income distribution make it to the upper half.[4]

**Romanticizing poverty makes people think it doesn't need to change. Don't romanticize poverty.**

Citations:

1. <https://medium.com/editors-picks/a29bf287ba17>
2. [http://www.urbanoutfitters.com/urban/catalog/productdetail.jsp?id=28802635&parentid=W\\_APP\\_DRESSES](http://www.urbanoutfitters.com/urban/catalog/productdetail.jsp?id=28802635&parentid=W_APP_DRESSES)
3. <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/policy/docs/ssb/v67n3/v67n3p1.html>
4. <http://www.bestpsychologydegrees.org/parents-matter/>
5. [http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/conferences/2A-4/Protecting\\_Children\\_Article\\_on\\_Poverty\\_and\\_Neglect.pdf/](http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/conferences/2A-4/Protecting_Children_Article_on_Poverty_and_Neglect.pdf/)
6. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3015237/table/T2/#TFN3>
7. <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/how-risky-is-it-really/201203/chronic-stress-can-shrink-your-brain>
8. <http://mybrainnotes.com/amygdala-prefrontal-cortex.jpg>
9. [http://dericbownds.net/uploaded\\_images/Sub\\_gen.gif](http://dericbownds.net/uploaded_images/Sub_gen.gif)
10. [http://www.princeton.edu/futureofchildren/publications/docs/07\\_02\\_03.pdf](http://www.princeton.edu/futureofchildren/publications/docs/07_02_03.pdf) (Table 1)



The original source of this article is [socialworkdegreecenter.com](http://socialworkdegreecenter.com)  
Copyright © [Global Research News](http://Global Research News), [socialworkdegreecenter.com](http://socialworkdegreecenter.com), 2013

---

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Global Research News](#)

**Disclaimer:** The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)  
[www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca) contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)