

Shadow Play

DisCrit, Dis/respectability, and Carceral Logics

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DIS-LOCATING PRACTICES: MATTER OUT OF (WHITE) PLACE

The shadows of Michael Brown, Renisha McBride, Jordan Davis, and Trayvon Martin cast a somber pall as we write this chapter—each of them unarmed young Black men and women shot down by White men simply because they were Black (and therefore *terrifying* to their killers). Following each murder were outraged protests from some in the community, horrified at what they perceived to be contemporary modes of lynching, while others have sought to explain away these murders on the grounds that every one of their killers faced a justifiable threat by the mere presence of young Black bodies “trespassing” in what are presumably White-only spaces. As we write this chapter, only Michael Dunn, who shot into a car of Black teenagers in a gas station when they refused to turn their music down, killing Jordan Davis, one of the car’s occupants while injuring others, has been convicted. Ricocheting amid the whine of bullets shot in sharp succession, amid desperate pleas for life as victims’ bodies fell, amid the poignant grief of parents having to assert their children’s worth as human beings, and amid angry protests by people of color who followed with a simple plea of “Don’t shoot!” was the even more somber lesson continuously reasserted as irrefutable fact—Black bodies are simply “matter out of place” (Douglas, 1966).

But there are other shadows that also cast a deathly pall on this chapter—other victims of police brutality—who make scarcely a ripple in our collective moral outrage at such violence. In early November 2014, Kaldrick Donald, a 24-year-old Black man with mental disabilities, was shot to death in his bathroom by a police officer who was responding to a call from his mother asking for help to get her son to take his medications (Inquisitr,

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2014). In August 2014, 25-year-old Ezell Ford was shot to death on a city street in Los Angeles by two police officers who, neighbors insisted, knew that Ford was diagnosed with a mental illness (Vives, Mather, & Winton, 2014). Three years earlier, in College Park, Maryland, an autistic Black man, Isaac Yearby, acquired brain injuries after being Tasered by police officers when asked to remove his hands from his pockets (Chirico, 2014). These are just a few of the many names and stories of disabled Black men and women encountering police brutality that Black disabled activist and cultural worker Leroy Moore has generated in a CD compilation of Krip-Hop artists (disabled hip-hop artists) entitled *Police Brutality Profiling MixTape* (BillyJam, 2012). In this work, Moore collaborates with other Krip-Hop artists to point to how race, class, gender, and disability coalesce in often terrifying ways to justify the callous and often unremarked killings of Black disabled bodies. Why, Moore asks, is disability not foregrounded while protesting police brutality against Black citizens?

One can hear echoes of Moore's question in the arguments articulated by Annamma et al. (2013) who also foreground the intersectional practices of racism and ableism via their formulation of Disability Studies and Critical Race Theory (DisCrit). Like Moore, DisCrit scholarship also urges us to explore the violent material practices by which race and disability coalesce at the intersections of gender identity, sexuality, and class that enable the fatal dis-location of certain marked bodies as matter out of (White) (normative) place. But not all dis-locations are fatal. And not all dis-locating practices are readily recognizable by an outraged public, nor are all perpetrators and victims easily identified in these dis-locations. In fact, because some dis-locating practices are so obviously violent, they serve to obscure other normalized everyday practices enacted by seemingly well-intentioned individuals to dis-locate bodies from classrooms, families, and communities and into carceral settings such as alternative schools, prisons, and institutions (Ben-Moshe, 2013). Focusing particularly on educational contexts, in this chapter we describe how oppressive (rather than empowering) discourses of disability and race are deployed at the intersections of social difference to justify the casual dis-location of student bodies along the school-to-prison pipeline by conceiving these bodies as matter out of (White, normative) place.

To ground this argument, we provide examples from an empirical study conducted in an urban elementary school in the northeastern United States. Our objective is to map out the actual pedagogical and representational practices that track youth into the school-to-prison pipeline. We use the term *school-to-prison pipeline* to highlight a complex network of relations that naturalize the movement of youth of color (many with identified or unidentified disabilities) from our schools and communities into underemployment or unemployment, short-term detention, and ultimately long-term (or even lifelong) incarceration (Kim, Losen, & Hewitt, 2010;

Meiners, 2007; Wald & Losen, 2003). Such practices of pathologization, racialization, and criminalization deployed in educational contexts are social processes, not entities inherent in specific bodies. Further, these practices cannot be disentangled as they work in tandem to reduce the life chances of certain (disabled, gender-nonconforming) youth (of color) and not others. Additionally, an allegiance to dis/respectability politics (which we discuss in the next section) in schools casts the shadow of disability as dis/reputable so as to mute the violence in the everyday practices of schooling that justify the pathologization and criminalization of racialized bodies.

DisCrit and the Politics of Respectability

Moore's work on police brutality at the intersection of race, class, and disability also foregrounds the cruel irony that Black disabled people (as well as those from other racial and ethnic groups) also experience violence at the hands of members of their own community. Moore explains that discourses that frame disability as a dangerous burden are so pervasive that hateful language and imagery regarding disability is omnipresent in politics, in the media, and even in the work of hip-hop artists: "[F]rom Republican presidential candidate, Rick Santorum, who said that his disabled daughter cost a lot; to movies like *21 Jump Street* in which Ice Cube makes fun of people with autism; and, to musicians from hard rock to hip-hop who continue to sing lyrics like 'What a waste like a cripple . . .'" (Hills, 2012). So prevalent are these hateful representations that even in instances where parents have murdered their own disabled children, courts have been more sympathetic to the parents for the assumed hardships of raising a disabled child. Here, disability itself becomes the alibi.

In the online magazine *Bitch Media*, Tamara Winfrey Harris (2012) describes the troubling role that respectability plays in the intersectional politics of race, class, and gender. Harris writes:

Respectability politics work[s] to counter negative views of Blackness by aggressively adopting the manners and morality that the dominant culture deems "respectable." The approach emerged in reaction to white racism that labeled Blackness as "other"—degenerate and substandard—with roots in an assimilationist narrative that prevailed in the late-19th-century United States. Black activists and allies believed that acceptance and respect for African-Americans would come by showing the majority culture "we are just like you."

The danger inherent in the assimilationist practices of respectability politics as described by Harris is that they unwittingly justify the dehumanization of Black bodies that fail to assimilate, and in doing so, also justify the violence meted out against them. For example, in the aftermath of each of the violent acts perpetrated against Black bodies described at the beginning

of this chapter, violence was justified by their perpetrators and supported in the mass media by claims that these unarmed Black victims had histories and lifestyles that did not adhere strictly to some predetermined normative notions of respectability. By the same token, those who sought justice for those murdered by foregrounding their humanity could do so only through attempting to prove that the victims met the stringent demands of (White, bourgeois, heteronormative) respectability.

Notable in Harris's definition of respectability politics is the shadowy presence of disability that is unremarked upon. Almost intangible in its concrete form and yet insistent in its nebulous presence, the dis/respectable politics of disability hovers over these narratives, justifying the negation of Black life. Echoing Moore's assertion at the beginning of this chapter, Disability Studies scholars working at the intersections of race and disability (Baynton, 2001; Bell, 2006; Ben-Moshe, 2013; Blanchett, 2010; Chen, 2013; Erevles, 2011b; Ferri & Connor, 2006; Samuels, 2014) have all described how oppressive discourses of disability have historically been used to justify the dehumanization of racialized bodies in ways that support oppressive practices such as slavery, settler colonialism, neocolonialism, educational and residential segregation, employment discrimination, as well as the institutionalization and incarceration of racialized bodies. As a result, Watts and Erevles (2004) pointed out that even potential intellectual allies such as Critical Race Theorists have unwittingly sought to distance themselves from all associations with disability because disability has historically cast a long shadow on the humanity of racialized communities not just in the United States, but also in transnational contexts.

It is here, then, that we bring together the unsettling discourses of respectability politics in critical engagement with what Annamma, Connor, and Ferri (2013) have defined as DisCrit in order to account for what we are calling dis/respectability politics. According to Annamma et al. (2013), DisCrit rejects the habitual practice of simply adding disability to analyses of the intersectional politics of race, class, gender identity, and sexuality to argue that "racism and ableism are normalizing processes that are interconnected and collusive" (p. 7). Grounding their argument specifically in educational contexts (but not limited to these contexts), Annamma et al. (2013) describe how "dis/ability and race first became equated and molded through pseudo-sciences, but [were] later further cemented through seemingly 'objective' clinical assessment practices . . . [that were further] reified through laws, policies, and programs until these concepts became uncritically conflated and viewed as the natural order of things" (p. 15).

Nestled in the interplay of these discursive and material practices are the politics of citizenship that bring race and disability into play by "triggering stereotypic associations with weaknesses, including fears of individuals seen as unhealthy, unable to adequately compete in work and war, with

their reproductive potential questioned, feared or even forcibly managed" (Annamma et al., 2013, p. 16). DisCrit foregrounds the problematic ways in which the (non)recognition of racialized bodies as citizens is materialized via the oppressive practices of, for example, educational segregation, immigration policies, and incarceration, by associating racialized bodies with discourses of disability that are the apparent embodiment of degeneracy and dis/respectability.

In this chapter, we locate DisCrit in critical engagement with the racial implications inherent in dis/respectability politics as it plays out in educational contexts. Although not identified as such until Annamma et al.'s (2013) article, there has been a significant body of research that has echoed several of the significant analytical tenets of DisCrit in its foregrounding of the overrepresentation of students from nondominant cultural groups in special education classes based on dubious labels such as *emotionally disturbed/behaviorally disordered* and *linguistically disabled* (Artiles, 2013; Blanchett, 2010; Erevelles, 2014; Harry & Klingner, 2014). Much of this research exhaustively highlights the complicated ways in which disability is attributed to racialized bodies to ensure their segregation in educational settings. In doing so, scholars argue for intersectional analyses that foreground the negative associations of disability for students in nondominant cultural groups in the United States and argue for culturally responsive interventions to reduce the detrimental effects of these associations with disability. And yet, in making what we believe are empowering moves for culturally responsive educational practices, we nevertheless continue to locate disability within the problematic purview of dis/respectability politics.

In making this observation, we have absolutely no intention of rehabilitating disability so as to meet the stringent demands of respectability. By refusing rehabilitation, we agree with Harris (2012) that *respectability does not reside within individual bodies but within powerful institutions and systems that propagate normative ideologies that serve to control the oppressed rather than challenge the violent practices of the oppressor*. What Harris (2012) fails to foreground is that these normative institutions and systems support ableist ideologies (Campbell, 2009) that cast wavering shadows on those subjectivities constituted at the intersections of race, class, gender identity, sexuality, and disability. Our interest in engaging both DisCrit and respectability politics is to show how both disability and race as socially constructed categories are mutually constitutive of each other. Our focus is primarily on the simultaneous process of "becoming Black" and "becoming disabled" that is usually uncritically defined as "natural" deviance or dis/respectability that also foregrounds a complex intersectional politics of race, class, and disability that is used to justify the pathologization and criminalization of racialized subjects in educational contexts (Ben-Moshe et al., 2014; Erevelles, 2014).

Background of the Study

Our argument is grounded in a study investigating current practices of discipline used in schools that initiate the dis-location of students along the school-to-prison pipeline. We argue that some students because of their race, class, and disability are marked as deviant through the everyday practices of school discipline by appealing to the seemingly innocuous logic of dis/respectability. Adams's (dissertation) research into school discipline and behavior management stems from various experiences as a special education teacher in segregated settings and as a graduate student and instructor in a teacher preparation program. Adams's teaching experiences in a limited secure residential facility (correctional facility) for boys in central New York, run by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, foregrounded blatant inequities at the intersection of race and disability in the U.S. educational and penal system. The youth assigned to these services were from the boroughs of New York City, supporting a demographic of approximately 90% African American, 8% Latino, and 2% White. Most of the boys were enrolled in special education classrooms and arrived at the classrooms with school records contained in a three-ring binder filled with data on discipline that had been collected on the boys over their years in school.

Although some of the boys were "residents" (a label used by the staff) who were sent to the correctional facility for car theft or drug possession/sales, many others were placed there for violations as a result of school discipline issues and truancy (truancy can be related to suspension from school)—also known as Person in Need of Supervision (PINS) violations. According to New York State Unified Court System (n.d.), "A child under the age of 18 who does not attend school, or behaves in a way that is dangerous or out of control, or often disobeys his or her parents, guardians or other authorities, may be found to be a Person In Need of Supervision or PINS." Violation of PINS can place children as young as 8 years old in a juvenile residential facility. Thus, a child who does not attend school or has been disciplined by the school, leading to suspensions, can be taken to court through the use of PINS, creating another **level of surveillance** by local and state entities that can be used as a way to remove the child from school and possibly the family, now labeled as dysfunctional (dis/respectable), thereby providing an explanation for the attribution of delinquency to the child.

Although the number of youth being sent to residential placements over the past decade has decreased, there continues to be a statistical significance in the racial makeup of the population being placed in these segregated settings. The New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) 2012 Annual Report showed that 812 youth were placed in residential facilities, with 404 placed in voluntary agencies, such as foster care or private care centers that serve as alternative placements for youth in homes that are deemed unfit to support the needs of children living there. These voluntary

agencies benefit from funding that comes from the state and federal government, which places them within the prison/disability industrial complex. The remaining 408 youth were placed in OCFS facilities. The demographics for the OCFS placements in 2012 were as follows: 84% male, 58% African American, 27% Latino, and 9% White. Of the 200 who were identified as needing special education services, 42% were classified as emotionally disturbed/autistic and 22% were labeled learning disabled. On an interesting note, placing emotional disturbance and autism under the same category revealed the problematic assumptions often made between aggressive/violent behavior and autism.

Schools, however, are not just conduits to the prison system, but also agents of the same carceral racist logic, even in the absence of imprisonment. Rodriguez (2010) states that

the prison has become central to the (re)production and (re)invention of a robust and historically dynamic white supremacist state: at its farthest institutional reaches, the prison has developed a capacity to organize and disrupt the most taken-for-granted features of everyday social life, including "family," "community," "school," and individual social identities. (p. 7)

Thus, through the use of "zero-tolerance" policies, schools have created institutions that police students through the surveillance of behavior and a hyper-vigilance directed toward students marked as both raced *and* disabled, resulting in their overrepresentation in office discipline referrals, suspensions, segregated classrooms, alternative schools, and ultimately incarceration.

Although the statistics we include may reinforce what is already common knowledge in the research on overrepresentation of children of color in special education and in the prison system, we argue that these statistics also provide an empirical backdrop to understand the processes that are involved in positioning students located at the intersections of race, class, and disability in punitive segregated educational facilities. Research in Disability Studies in Education (DSE) demonstrates the ways in which students become "disabled" under specific social and educational processes that have the power to associate certain categories of students with specific labels and not others (Artiles, 2013). For instance, students of color and those from low socioeconomic status often receive labels such as emotionally disturbed/behaviorally disordered while more affluent, White students receive labels such as a specific learning disability or autism (Mandell et al., 2009; Tincani, Travers, & Boutot, 2009). These differential labels lead to further inequalities in services rendered and treatment offered, resulting in the provision of medical treatment and educational interventions for some and criminalization (referrals, pushout, expulsions) for others (Erevelles, 2014). Similarly, Critical Race Theory (CRT) shows how these processes of criminalization

are also socially produced by labeling certain students, mostly boys of color, as dangerous and in need of containment or expulsion (Artiles, 2013; Watts & Erevellas, 2004). In this chapter, we combine the two theoretical approaches of Disability Studies in Education and Critical Race Theory by using the framework of DisCrit to discuss how the processes of labeling and criminalization contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline for racialized students with special education labels by alluding to the oppressive discourse of dis/respectability politics.

Notes on Methods: The Setting and Participants

The setting for this study is Morgan Elementary School (pseudonym), an urban elementary school with 387 enrolled students. The demographics of the student population at the time of the study was 83% Black, 11% White, 5% Hispanic, and 1% Native American. Of the total population, 84% of the students were eligible for free lunch and 5% were eligible for lunch at a reduced price, indicating that 89% of the student population came from low-income families. Morgan Elementary had been under state review for 8 years for not meeting adequate yearly progress and for reporting the highest incidence of discipline problems (such as office referrals and suspensions) of all the elementary schools in the district, with an average number of discipline incidents of 25% over a 5-year period. In addition, Morgan had one of the lowest student proficiency rates in the district, with approximately only 20% of its students scoring at the proficient level on the state tests. The community in which the school was located reported a child poverty rate of 62%, and 32% of the adults in the surrounding area had not earned a high school diploma.

The data for the study were collected over 2 school years via open-ended interviews conducted by the first author with six teachers who were White women; one principal, who was a White woman; and two African American women: the social worker and a school staff member. The participants were all members of the Positive Behavior Supports (PBIS) Team in charge of the implementation of their schoolwide behavior management system. In addition to the interviews, Adams also attended the PBIS Team meetings as a participant observer to the process of implementation. Although there were rich data from multiple sources, for this study we only included the interviews of three White teachers and the principal. Each of the classroom teachers was struggling with managing the behaviors of students she worked with while the principal made decisions about the way students were disciplined, and so their interviews highlighted the processes by which students were framed as dis/respectable and therefore deviant.

Sixteen interviews were conducted in various locations throughout the school building, along with 22 hours of participant observation. All interviews were transcribed and coded for themes that emerged from the data.

For this chapter, we draw on only a small portion of the data set that focused specifically on ways in which White school personnel pathologized the students, the families, and the community at large by appealing to the problematic discourses of dis/respectability. In the next section, we discuss the ways in which the shadows of race, class, and disability, both apparent and yet nebulous at the same time, served to pathologize students and justify their dis-location to segregated and ultimately carceral educational contexts.

Ideologies of Dis-Location

The interviews with the principal and faculty at Morgan Elementary address key concepts that point to the casual pathologization of students, their families, and their community. Listening carefully to the responses by the principal and the faculty, we found that although *race, class, and disability* are never explicitly mentioned in the interviews, their *shadowy presence dominated the narratives by appealing to the oppressive deployment of respectability politics*. We identified discourses of dis/respectability in the teachers' narratives by looking for coded language/catchphrases such as *gangs, drugs, rebellious*, and *the community*. In this section of the chapter, we identify the ideologies of dis-location as articulated by the principal and the teachers that locate dis/respectability as inherent in their students, families, and communities and explore the implications these ideologies have for students via the critical lens of DisCrit.

"Dangerous Minds in Criminal Space"

School personnel justified the transformation of educational institutions into prison-like settings by deploying the language of *criminality*—a more virulent marker of dis/respectability. For example, the new principal of Morgan Elementary, Wendy (a White principal who had been at the school for 1 year and an administrator with the district for 12 years) was hired to help with the school's discipline issues because of her prior training and experience implementing School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports (SWPBIS). SWPBIS was implemented in the school to address the outstanding number of discipline referrals and suspensions, as well as to improve academic performance. Wendy joked in an interview that she was referred to as "the closer" because wherever she went, the school would end up closing, although she claimed she was there to help. Unfortunately, Morgan Elementary closed after Wendy's second year there because the school had an increase in office referrals and suspension rates in addition to poor performance on state tests.

In the following quote, Wendy talked about a school (Wayne Middle School—a pseudonym) where she had formerly been an administrator. The school had a lot of behavioral referrals of students and was on the state's Persistently Dangerous Schools list. While describing the school, Wendy

referenced films that depicted teachers saving “bad” urban youth through their talented pedagogies:

And—but we [administrators and teachers] . . . did a really good job with ending gang stuff, like the fights in school. The big thing that we saw is violence, like bringing weapons into school and you know, big gang kind of fights. So actually, we felt like from what we did from 2002 to 2003 were huge. We got the gangs and the drugs and the weapons out of the school, and the kind of referral[s]. . . . It was about disruptive behavior, like kids doing more like, “Fuck this, I’m not going to do it and storming out of the classroom.” . . . So we felt like, what do you mean we’re on a Persistently Dangerous list? This is a school that had actually kids dealing drugs in the hall, you know what I mean? It was like all those bad movies, you know, like *Stand and Deliver* . . . *Dangerous Minds*, that’s—I mean, no kidding, that’s what Wayne Middle School looked like between 2000 and 2003.

When the school decided to implement a schoolwide Positive Behavior Supports discipline system to reduce the high rates of discipline referrals and suspensions, a schoolwide token system was used as a motivator to provide Positive Behavioral Supports. Here, the implicit assumption was that bad behavior is an individual choice and has no social history. Wendy discussed the use of “Wayne Dollars”—tokens given to students as rewards for making good choices. Unfortunately, the value placed on Wayne Dollars by the students in Wendy’s former school did not manifest itself in a positive way. Students who were unable to earn the Wayne Dollars because of discipline problems resorted to alternative methods of acquiring them. Wendy noted that the Wayne Dollars thus began to circulate within a counter-economy:

Yeah, that was within the first 3 months of implementation. We had Wayne Dollars and then—(laughs) and then it was funny because . . . the [public] library that was down the hill from the school, it was having a problem because kids were trying to counterfeit them using the [copy machine]. . . . And then the police were about to arrest some kids for playing craps and they thought it was real money and it was fake, you know, it’s the Wayne Dollars. And then another funny story about that first, like, 6 months of implementation at Wayne. . . . There was a kid who was able to sell a Wayne Dollar for a real dollar and, like, we were trying to explain to [the] kids, “Wait a minute. . . . Don’t give away real money for Wayne [Dollars]!” But, it showed you . . . to the point of how much they valued those dollars (laughs) that they would give up real money. And, then, we’re talking about the poorest kids in the city, you know. . . .

From the above quote, it is apparent that the students at Wayne valued the token dollars, because they wanted to participate in the school activities and needed the dollars to do so. But rather than serving as a reward system, which was the original intention, the token system served as a punishment system, excluding students with behavioral referrals. Students who did not meet behavioral expectations were supposed to see the other students being rewarded for their "respectable" behavior and then want to behave similarly in order to be included in the token economy. Students, however, apparently resisted this exclusion by creating their own counter-economy that was, of course, disruptive to the school's punitive token economy. However, rather than reading the student actions as a critique of a token economy, student actions were described in criminalizing language, such as *counterfeit* and *gambling*, and students were described as "naturally" dis/respectable. Additionally, they were also seen as "naturally" unable to make correct choices even though a system was put in place to rehabilitate them. Wendy, and the staff at Wayne, worked hard to end gang-associated behavior in the school. They had no control over the behavior outside of the school. However, the behavior that Wendy described in the above quote, though it happened outside the school, was still associated with the school through the Wayne Dollars. Although Wendy laughed while telling the story, indicating that in her perception these behaviors were amusing rather than dangerous, these same behaviors resulted in office discipline referrals that labeled the students as "offenders" in the discipline data for the school. Here, though race and disability are never mentioned, the shadows linger in the pauses, the laughter, the words, and ultimately, the disciplinary actions.

Moreover, the repeated exclusion of "dis/respectable" students from school community celebrations further alienated these students from their peers. These students were pathologized and labeled as *disruptive*, *dysfunctional*, *naughty*, *in crisis*, *frequent fliers*, *on the edge*, *ED*, and *offenders*—all terms teachers used in the school to describe dis/respectable students. Much of these practices and the language deployed at Wayne mirrors language used in prisons, an argument supported by scholars of prison abolition.

Pathologizing Student Behavior

Teachers used different terminologies to construct the dis/respectable student. For example, Robin, the White physical education teacher who has been at the school for 19 years, distinguished between students who made good decisions and the "naughties," who made bad choices. The language of choice placed responsibility squarely on the student to face the outcomes of engaging in "disruptive" behaviors. Noticing that the same students did the "right" thing, and realizing that she was unable to help the students who acted up and made bad choices, Robin turned to the language of pathology to explain her dilemma:

Right. I mean, it's so frustrating, I can imagine for a good kid who always makes good choices and, you know, just sits there while there's chaos raining around them. And, like, "Okay . . . what the hell is going on here, you know?" . . . [S]o I try to reward them for following directions, because you're doing what you should do, you know? And if I see a child who always makes bad choices making a good choice, yeah, I'm going to reward him, too. But I'm not going to go out of my way to get him [the kid making bad choices] on track. I'm sorry; you have 20 kids here making good choices and you have five not. And it's always the same ones, so I don't know of any interventions in place for them.

She went on to suggest that rather than try to intervene or support these students whom she described as "naughty ones," she was simply waiting them out until they moved on to the next grade—which she realized was a Sisyphean task:

Well, a lot of the naughty ones are 5th-graders and they're leaving. However, there's always going to be kids to take their place. You know, there's 4th-grade naughty children that are going to move up to 5th grade, and there's 3rd grade that are going to become naughty 4th-graders. Yeah. So, I don't know of anything [behavioral interventions] that's been done for them.

Thus, rather than recognizing her own inadequacies as a teacher in finding creative ways to encourage students to cooperate with her in class or the lack of positive interventions, Robin pathologized these students, attributing their failures to meet the codes of dis/respectability in her classroom as *an inherent deficit within the student*. Once again, discourses of race and disability have a shadowy presence in her assertions of inadequacy.

The pathologization of students and their families by the school staff was foregrounded in many different contexts to explain away the failure of the school to meet the needs of the students and their community. Thus, for example, Sally, a White 2nd-grade elementary teacher who had been at the school for 26 years, when asked about how previous principals had handled discipline in the school, had difficulty relating structural problems in the school to discipline issues. Instead, Sally resorted to the pathologization of students and their families:

So, I mean, at that point, yes, she [the principal] was supportive and we could make a change. There may have been one or two children that I would consider to be in crisis, and then a few who were on the fringe, but you could get them to move toward the [middle] but the culture and the society of where I worked also looked and sounded

different at that time. So it was still easier to get parent involvement and contact and those kinds of things. The administrator that I have now, I believe is very supportive and working hard. But again, there's more that we're up against. There's just more out there. I mean, for example, there's a gun for hire in our neighborhood right now where you can literally hire the gun for a couple of hours, do whatever you need to do. . . . Yeah, and the kids know about it. And I mean, that's going on. And that's just one small example. They're walking to school literally crossing dead bodies because there's shootings in the morning or whatever. So those things have always kind of been here. I don't think to the severity that it's here now. And so even though . . . this administrator's only been here for this year, and although I believe she's supportive in putting things in place, it's sort of like comparing apples and oranges, if that makes any sense.

Sally created an elaborate scene of violence in the community that could be taken from a crime drama. Although the neighborhood has one of the higher crime rates in the city, the degree that Sally described was certainly an exaggeration. Although the city, for its size and population, has a higher crime rate than New York City, the majority of the crimes committed include aggravated assault, burglary, and larceny. Further, although the city had 11 murders that year, none occurred in the surrounding area of the school. By describing the community as a war zone, Sally was able to pathologize the entire community and the students as deviant, thereby locating the problem as endemic to the community, rather than recognizing structural issues within the school or community. Although Sally recognized that Morgan has had a high turnover rate for administrators, which can create instability at the school, a point she began with in the interview, she had difficulty separating the changes that took place within the school that affected the dynamics of the school climate from the changes in the community, families, and students that she gave as a factor in the discipline and academic achievement issues in her classroom and the school in general.

This trend continued in the interview with Sally. Like Robin, Sally's inability to manage her students' behavior in class was attributed to her students' "crisis" rather than to her own methods of engaging her students in her classroom:

This particular school year for me, I have a lot of children that I would consider to be in crisis and I'm really struggling with maneuvering their behaviors, I guess is a good word for it. And I know it's because of the quantity of the children who are in crisis. . . . And I think . . . as much as they are rebelling and stuff with their behavior, I still believe that when they walk into the classroom, that that's their safe place to fall. They know that there's certain parameters. For example, they

know that legally, I'm not going to put my hands on them where at home, culturally the form of discipline may be whoopings or beatings or whatever. You know, I don't put any personal bias on that, but that is the culture. But they know that that definitely is not a choice, so that's already one thing off the plate.

In the above quote, "You know, I don't put any personal bias on that, but that is the culture," Sally distanced herself from any perceivable racial bias. And yet her arguments place the failure to connect with students solely on the pathologized families and communities her students come from. Here again, disability as dis/respectability is deployed as a justification for the pathologization of racialized bodies.

CONCLUSION: SHADOW PLAY

This chapter investigates the way students in an urban elementary school were "simultaneously raced and dis/abled" through the discourse of "dis/respectable politics" as the participants describe the students, families, and community they work with, justifying the negation of Black life. DisCrit allows us to examine how the discourse of race, although not explicitly discussed, is coded throughout the participants' dialogue and brings to the foreground the ways in which racialized bodies are pathologized and dis/abled. As the educators construct the students as dysfunctional, naughty, criminal, and dis/abled, the students move from the classroom, through the office, past the professionals with the diagnosis and treatment, into the segregated spaces, and out the door. In this way, oppressive (rather than empowering) discourses of disability and race are deployed at the intersections of social difference to justify the casual dis-location of student bodies along the school-to-prison pipeline by conceiving these bodies as dis/respectable and therefore as matter out of (White, normative) place.

Our argument, while insisting on analyses that engage the simultaneity of race and disability as articulated in DisCrit, also insists that discourses of disability as dis/respectability are not pathological attributes but rather are social processes constituted within oppressive historical conditions that also associate disability with dis/respectable deviance (Erevelles, 2012). Our argument disrupts the historical seamless association of disability with dis/respectable deviance by rejecting the pathological in favor of a political economic analysis. In this way, our argument, situated in the more generative tradition of DisCrit, seeks to build critical alliances that could potentially improve the lives of many students living at the intersections of difference.