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Journal of Critical Scholarship on Higher Education and Student Affairs

Book Review

Black Minds Matter

**Realizing the Brilliance, Dignity, and Morality of
Black Males in Education**

RESEARCH-IN-BRIEF

Johnnie L. Campbell, Jr., *Loyola University Chicago*

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Q Why did you choose JCSHESA for this article?

A As an emerging scholar, I was encouraged to seek journals that align with not only the scholarship I produce, but also those who align with who I am as a person and scholar. Because my work aims to challenge systems of oppression that exist in educational spaces, I felt JCSHESA is the ideal location because on its surface and throughout its scholarship, I can see a clear connection to the goal. Social justice, for me, is an onto-epistemological calling. I am called to this work. It was important that my first published work be housed in a journal that supported that calling and aligned with it.

Q How does this article reflect your identity as a critical scholar?

A I chose to review this text because I saw myself in the text. As a Black man who has navigated many of the harms revealed in the scholarship of this novel, I felt intimately connected to this work. I felt that this work affirmed the need for my own research interests, while giving me an opportunity to learn what complexities lie as I take on and contribute to that task. My choice to take on this work directly pushes the bounds and expectations many may argue are significant to research and knowledge production. Instead of being “objective” to the work, I leaned into the work and connected who I am as well as my worldviews to it. I chose intentionally to do this as a critical scholar, because our challenge is beyond the production of knowledge. I am called to consistently challenge those whose knowledge is credible and whose knowledge is consistently in the margins. From this understanding, I hope to continue my growth as a critical scholar.

Q Who has influenced your scholarship?

A I would first like to thank the first people who have inspired me as a human being, a crucial component to my scholarship. I thank my mom, Helen and my late father, Johnnie, Sr., who birthed in me the resistance knowledge that I use in my scholarship. Your sacrifices and examples, without access to higher education, remind me -what I bring to scholarship; certain knowledges that are beneficial and crucial to understanding what learners bring with them into the classroom. Additionally, I would like to name scholars whom have encouraged me in my scholarly pursuits. I consider these individuals significant influences in my scholarly development because they have challenged me to think deeper and simultaneously remind me that I belong here, that I too bring value to scholarship. Drs. Daniel Spikes, Brian Burt, & Lorenzo Baber - for being the first Black men scholars to see me and cultivate my scholarly pursuits of a PhD, I thank you. To Dr. Alphonso Simpson, the first professor I had in college that looked like me. I thank you for influencing my zeal for learning and my intellectual curiosity. I have to also name scholars who provided the spark in my concern and intent for Black men in education through their scholarship, Drs. Shaun Harper, J. Luke Wood, bell hooks, Gloria Ladson-Billings, to name a few, have certainly planted firm footprints for emerging scholars like me to follow. I thank each of you for your life, your work and your inspiration.

Q Who do you hope reads your writing and why?

A First, I hope that educators read this work. Particularly those who engage with Black boys and men, know that this population can and should be leaders in learning spaces. Far too often, Black boys and men are seen as less than, dehumanized and harmed in the places where dreams, intellectual curiosity and self-actualization should be cultivated. This work encourages those that have this responsibility to consider and challenge the ways that they might proactively inform the responsibility they hold as facilitators of learning. Additionally, it is important to me that those (policymakers, administrators) who influence what happens in the classroom from a broader and higher level engage with this work and consider how they might unconsciously or consciously create mechanisms to harm or humanize Black boys and men as they dare to learn. Lastly, I produced this review for those who may struggle with having access to scholarly resources to further their growth.

Author Biography



Johnnie Campbell (he/him) is a second year PhD student in Loyola University Chicago's Higher Education program. Johnnie is a Black, first generation college student from the south side of Chicago whose

future aims are to enter the professoriate and further his research at an institution that aligns with his personal, professional and intellectual pursuits. Johnnie is an emerging critical scholar whose research interests broadly center Black boys and men's resistance to interlocking systems of oppression that exist in US society, the role of deficit in various educational environments, policies and praxis, and the evolution of equity, diversity, inclusion and justice work in education and other institutional contexts. Ultimately, Johnnie aims to contribute to scholarly dialogue that humanizes minoritized bodies, while highlighting the brilliance, morality and humanity of these populations.

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