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To cite this article:

Hemming, P. 2010. Jeffrey, C. and Dyson, J., editors *Telling Young Lives: Portraits of Global Youth* Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2008 [Book Review]. *Progress in Human Geography* 35(5), pp. 694-696. (10.1177/03091325100340050102)

**Jeffrey, C. and Dyson, J. (eds) (2008) *Telling Young Lives: Portraits of Global Youth*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 232 pp. US\$69.50 cloth, US\$23.95 paper. ISBN 978 1 59213 930 9 cloth, 978 1 59213 931 6 paper**

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*Telling young lives: portraits of global youth* is a book edited by Craig Jeffrey and Jane Dyson that presents a set of in-depth narrative portraits of young people from around the world. The volume aims to illustrate the contemporary local and global politics of everyday life, and the connections between the two, as experienced and negotiated by individual young people in a variety of different social contexts from the global North and South. Katharyne Mitchell successfully sets the tone of the book in her foreword, when she points to a growing movement in academic research towards engagement with the non-academic world aimed at facilitating collaboration with, and positive impacts on, broader society. As such, she outlines the innovative way in which the contributors have aimed to make the book relevant and accessible to non-academic audiences. Jeffrey and Dyson continue this theme in their introduction (Chapter 1), pointing to the way in which the chapters avoid the use of 'academic citations, specialist terms or lengthy reviews of scholarly debates' (p. 2). Rather, the chapters draw on contemporary academic themes and ideas in a more informal way, illustrated through the narrative approach to each young person's particular story. The editors then go on to introduce the three main themes of the book, which are 'restructuring youth', 'imagining youth' and 'political geographies of youth'.

The first theme, 'restructuring youth', focuses on the contexts in which young people make the journey from child to adult. These contexts include changing employment opportunities, economic restructuring, war and conflict, educational developments and health epidemics. Jane Dyson discusses the life of Saka, a 16-year-old from a Rajput family, growing up in the Indian Himalayas and negotiating changing family and work expectations of her role as a young woman (Chapter 2). Next, Kristina Gibson introduces the reader to Blacc, who is a bisexual young man of colour grappling with changing homeless shelter provision in New York City (Chapter 3). Paula Meth presents the life of Vusi, a young black South African man in Durban living in the context of local political violence, while working through friendships and relationships (Chapter 4).

The second theme, 'imagining youth', is concerned with the negative images and stereotypes of young people often portrayed by authorities and the media. These chapters highlight ways in which young people challenge these representations of youth as apathetic, rebellious or disengaged with society. Linda McDowell draws a portrait of a young white working-class man from Sheffield in England and the journey he has taken through various employment experiences (Chapter 5). Peter Hopkins discusses the life, identity and political views of Kabir, a young male Scottish Muslim who is involved in higher education and community

work (Chapter 6). Next, Kathrin Horschelmann tells the story of Sven, a 15-year-old boy in the eastern German city of Leipzig, and his lifestyle, identity and cultural influences (Chapter 7). Sean Crotty, Christopher Moreno and Stuart Aitken then present the life of Mike, the son of a former drug addict in California, who is negotiating the changing availability of youth support and rehabilitation programmes (Chapter 8).

The third theme, 'political geographies of youth', highlights the ways in which young people engage or disengage with formal and informal political movements and processes. Alex Jeffrey presents the life of Zilho, a young Bosniak man who lives in a town in northern Bosnia-Herzegovina, in the context of historical ethnic division and gradual economic recovery (Chapter 9). Next, Danny Hoffman discusses Mohammad's story, a young man living in Freetown in Sierra Leone, negotiating his involvement in war and patronage networks (Chapter 10). Craig Jeffrey tells the story of Suresh, a young Dalit man at a university in Uttar Pradesh, India, who is heavily involved in student politics, representing and fighting for the rights of other Dalit students (Chapter 11). Benjamin Gardner introduces Nala, who is the founder of a grassroots non-governmental organization that works for Massai women in Tanzania to aid development, following her work from its humble beginnings to its international recognition (Chapter 12). Anoop Nayak explores how Helena, a white working-class young woman in the northeast of England, engages with the cultural politics of race through her love of black music, dance and fashion (Chapter 13).

In their introduction, the editors also point to a number of cross-cutting themes, including the links between formal and 'everyday' politics, processes of spatial change and migration, and the politics of intergenerational relations. They refer to Chapter 14 to illustrate this, where Tracey Skelton tells the story of Susannah, a young deaf lesbian woman in northern England, working through life decisions and relationships with her family. Many of the portraits do not fit neatly into the three main themes identified in the introduction but rather contribute to all of them, or illustrate other issues that could have been drawn out further, such as gendered expectations and relationships, and individual autonomy within structural constraints. The afterword by Chris Philo and Kate Swanson is arguably more successful at reflecting this fluidity through their identification of three main cross-cutting themes: 'crisis in the categories of adult, youth and child', 'crisis in identity and transition' and 'the remarkable and the unremarkable'.

The portraits contained in this volume are undoubtedly very powerful and contain an energy that is rarely found in academic writing. The style and the subject matter mean that it is indeed more accessible to non-academic audiences than the average youth geographies publication, yet the academic themes are still there in the text, even though they often require a little more effort from the reader to draw them out and locate them within wider academic work. Presenting research in this non-traditional way is an innovative and radical endeavour, so there will always be challenges in terms of getting the balance right between accessibility on the one hand and academic rigour on the other. It may fall to the individual reader to judge how well this volume meets those particular challenges.