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Book Review: Lost Youth in the Global City: Class,Culture and the Urban Imaginary

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(Tony) shares the following with the interviewer:

Tony: [I] listen to rock music, which I usually don't like but now I'm getting fully into it...the rockers are happy with that, me getting into it.... Most people classify me as a thug because they call me Sun [Slim] Shady, 8, you know, Eminem. They mostly classify me as that 'cause I listen to rap and all that...and I had my head shaved and dyed blonde at the base.

Interviewer: OK.

Tony:[B]ut they said that I'm slowly starting to turn....I eventually hope to get out of that, like being my own self, next year (p. 117).

Through Tony's responses, readers come in close contact with the participant's struggle to be defined beyond the monolithic characterizations of others.

Throughout the book, the authors weave theory through discussions of participants' lived experiences, and in doing so, clearly illustrate the connection between theory and material conditions for youth on the fringes of global cities. For this reader, this was most clear in the way that Dillabough and Kennelly shared the experiences of a 15-year-old Portuguese boy named Hayden, who lives with his mother. During an interview, Hayden discussed his feelings about the fact that his mother had to work two jobs. When asked if this was the ideal work situation for his mother, Hayden stated that it did not bother him, and "everything's okay" (p. 149). The authors offer supportive scholarship that theorizes Hayden's responses regarding his mother's arduous work demands. Reay and Lucey (2000, 2003) "describe [Hayden's] ambivalence as a form of working-class resilience or refusal, a manner of seeing things as bearable, 'even OK', in order to not be overwhelmed" (p. 149). Dillabough and Kennelly's straightforward technique of linking theory to participants' experiences is effective because they provide examples that illustrate their method of using theory to explain material conditions in society.

Aside from showing readers how to link theory to rich qualitative data, Dillabough and Kennelly provide a thoughtful and theoretically well-grounded model for how to explore the experiences of youth who reside in global cities. By developing an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that draws support from an effective ethnographic research design, the authors emphasize the importance of a reflective and critical strategy for researching youths' lived experiences in global cities. Such a model may be useful in replicating this research in other geographic and cultural contexts around the world. In this way, the authors create the opportunity for comparing youth experiences in many global cities, which in turn will contribute to a more intricate understanding of the ways that youth culture and identity develop and are performed. However, in regard to understanding the ways youth culture is discussed in this book, it is evident that this research is tailored to the needs of a particular audience, individuals who pursue careers in the academy. With this in mind, the authors do not provide an invitation for the results from their study to be shared with individuals studied in their research. It would have been helpful for the authors to discuss how the results are applicable to the youth and their families. Perhaps it is beyond the scope of the book, but further research investigating youth subcultures should build the need to ponder the idea of creating a research project that communicates to the individuals in the study as well as individuals in academic circles. In order to transform the position of youth in global cities, it is important to continue the work discussed by the authors by making it accessible to all audiences. The engagement of multiple audiences (educators, youth, parents/guardians, other stakeholders) in this text would have made the book stronger, and would have encouraged needed dialogue.

Overall, the authors use engaging methodological tools to learn about youths' perceptions of their lived experiences in global cities. Their work is a contribution to interdisciplinary fields, including education, sociology, and youth studies, and is ideal for novice researchers seeking a model of ethnographic research, especially given the ways in which efforts are made to articulate clear links between theory, methods, and analysis.