

Jessica Campbell

Alison Halsall

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Young People as Social Actors in Conflict Zones

Children and youth living in conflict zones typically give adults the impression of young people as innocent bystanders in violent situations. The books *Three Wishes: Palestinian and Israeli Children Speak* by Deborah Ellis and *The Complete Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi provide first-hand accounts of children living in such circumstances. The lives of children and youth in both books are impacted by political decisions over which they have no control. In *Three Wishes*, children living in Palestine and Israel are witnesses to their lived experiences on each side of the conflict. In comparison, Satrapi's *Persepolis* is a graphic narrative that recounts her upbringing in Iran during the Islamic revolution. Through their narratives, Ellis and Satrapi demonstrate that young people have the capacity to voice insightful opinions, exercise agency by challenging authority and the potential to act as agents of change through resistance to oppression. Ellis and Satrapi challenge the construction of childhood as a time of innocence by representing young people as social and political actors who are not passive bystanders to armed conflict.