The Vertigo of Late Modernity. *Young, Jock*. Sage, London 2007. 231 + x pp. 9781 4129 3573 9 (pbk).

The emergence of an increasingly excluded post-industrial underclass and the prevalence of violence and terrorism marking contemporary Western society are major themes of concern in this intriguing and briskly paced text. Attempting to shape a millennial model to describe landscapes of late modernity characterized by hyperpluralism, and hybridism in a world obscured by the precepts of binary thought and vision, Jock Young references from a significant variety social researchers, commentators and studies from the left and right of the political spectrum to bolster his argument that: 'Vertigo is the malaise of late modernity: a sense of insecurity of insubstantiality, and of uncertainty, a whiff of chaos and a fear of falling'(p. 12). Young's major preoccupations are to discuss, explain and dismantle theories concerned with "Othering". In doing so he attempts to set forth a new thesis on the parameters for inclusion and exclusion, which he claims have been binarily framed and exemplified by the "New Bantustans" of Mike Davis (1990), "the dual city" of Manuel Castells (1994), and "the geographies of exclusion" of David Sibley (1995), among others. Young's dissection of the current "War on Terror" incorporates this critique in the manner of a post-structuralist criminologist, and he attempts to link this phenomenon as symptomatic of the emerging fabric of media-driven societies of the West, with the flourish of an ontological question: 'Thus we ask "what is terrorism?" as if it were a fact out there and not a function of our phenomenological view … the same of course is true of attempted definitions of all social categories; think of violence, pornography, prostitution, rape, the gang, or indeed suicide' (p. 7). Opening his text with a chapter entitled 'Crossing the Borderline' Young sets out to situate his study in the early years of the twenty-first century by juxtaposing class hierarchies established by Engels' *Conditions of the Working Class* (1844) and Durkheim's *Division of Labour* (1893) against a reflection inspired by Hobsbawm's *The Age of Extremes* (1994) on the current global division between the included and excluded: 'The American Dream and the suburbs becomes replaced with a First World Dream extending across the world – harbouring the desires of the privileged and the envy of the rest' (p. 2). The impact of this new sociological paradigm, asserts Young, rests on three axes: the disembeddedness of everyday life; awareness of a pluralism of values, and an individualism with a ideal of self-realization. The historical and cultural contingency of these phenomena intimate Zygmunt Bauman's concept of "liquid modernity" and underlies Young's discussion of the disembededdness of conventional notions of class, culture and social norms whose boundaries have started to 'blur, shift, overlap and detach' (p. 3) in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Drawing upon various studies, Young illustrates the manifestation of this phenomenon with a variety of cases: illegal Latin American migrants working as domestic workers and gardeners in southern California infiltrate affluent gate communities which are designed to exclude them socially and economically; poor black gang members in Philadelphia appropriate middle-class values of capital accumulation and consumption by their participation in the drug trade and ostentatious display of "bling" symbolized by gold and diamond-encrusted jewelry. New Labour politicians fuelled by the ideology of neoliberalism rather than any empirical evidence travel to the USA to investigate how the states of Wisconsin and Michigan are dismantling their failed welfare systems. In Young's view the changes in the perceived class structure have shifted from occupational hierarchy to the twin poles of media-driven celebrity and the growing service economy underclass. Meritocracy is out in Western society and identity politics replaces that of class in the period of late modernity. Borders established by the "Weberian Cage" of conventional social thought in the early twentieth century have melted in the wake created by the twin engines of late international capitalism and digital multimedia, and in turn have driven a significant social global shift from structure to agency politically, economically and culturally. It is this realignment which induces the vertigo of the book's title, and in Chapter 8, subtitled 'The banality of evil', Young's critique of the simple dualism between Occidentalism and Orientalism in the context of terrorism and anti-terrorism extends his view that 'a whiff of chaos and a fear of falling' (p. 12) characterizes the West's current imbroglio in the Middle East. Young observes that the manifestation of violence in this "essentialized" region echoed itself in the events of 9/11, the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, and the London Tube bombings in July 2005. He argues that economic and cultural globalization have 'resulted in contradictions *within* the First World and *between* the First and Third Worlds' (pp. 154–155). Indeed, Third World Jihadists are dou-

bly excluded from the West and their proxies in the Middle East, while military recruits from the First World, Young notes, 'are disproportionately from ethnic minorities, the lower working class – those who join because of lack of work and desire for educational advancement' (p. 157). Young's most explicit castigation of the Occidental/Oriental binary which assumes the irrationality of the latter against the rationality of the former is contained in his discussion of the notorious photographs of Iraqi prisoners being sexually humiliated by US military personnel and the beheading of Western hostages by Islamic Jihadists. He writes:

> These pictures [in Abu Grahib] are of course the very epitome of Occidentalism: the sexuality, the decadence, the immorality, the hypocrisy, the blatant sexuality of the women involved, the degradation of the human body, a photographic satire of bourgeois individualism worthy of the Marquis de Sade … . Similarly, when the New York *Daily News* on 31 May 2004 greeted the slitting of hostages' throats by terrorists in Saudi Arabia with the front page banner headline 'BARBARIC', this was an exclamation of shock but not of surprise. For this was precisely our Orientalist image of them.
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> (pp. 160–161)

The text's subsequent discussion of "exclusive communities" which proffer such increasingly globalized binaries (which, in Young's opinion, no longer adequately describe the social and economic landscapes constituting late modernity) juxtaposes the organic concept of the past with the vir-

tual of the present, driven by media, celebrity and marked by difference and deterrorialization. A concluding observation inspired by Francis Wheen's biography of Marx, in which it is noted that the metaphor of "melting" in the *Communist Manifesto* seems more appropriate for our contemporary globalized society than for the nineteenth-century industrial conditions, exemplifies the theoretical prisms employed by Young in this peripatetic yet immediately engaging text. His style calls to mind Castells and (despite being heavily referenced) is reminiscent of Lefebvre's *oeuvre*, particularly selections from the volumes of *Critique of Everyday Life*. This book and its bibliography will be of particular interest to geographers working at the interstices of criminology, sociology, cultural studies and anthropology, who like Young are endeavouring to study current social terrains emerging in the wake of Western modernity.

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Charles Travis
Department of Geography and Anthropology
Rowan University
USA