Law, Culture, and Society: LatCrit Theory and Transdisciplinary Approaches
Identifying Identities: The Politics of Community in Historical and
Contemporary Perspective

*727 MULTI-VOICED SOCIETY: PHILOSOPHICAL NUANCES ON RUSHDIE'S MIDNIGHT'S
CHILDREN

Fred Evans [FNa1]

In Midnight's Children, Salman Rushdie represents the ethnic and political diversity of India in terms of five-hundred and eighty-one children born within the first hour of India's independence. Each of these children has a special talent. One of them, Saleem Sinai, has the ability to read minds. He is therefore the natural site for communication among the children - for a "national network" or "forum" through which the voices of the children, the voices of India, "the myriad tongues of Babel," can speak to one another and argue over the philosophies and aims they might adopt as a group. [FN1] Saleem Sinai also recognizes that each "I" in India "contains a similar multitude," and that understanding any of these "I"s requires "swallow[ing] a world." [FN2] Despite their initial willingness to hear one another, the children of midnight eventually become more like the adults rearing them. They transform their network of voices, their "Midnight's Children National Conference," into a plurality of discourses that exclude others, involving racism and other forms of sectarianism, each demanding that it become the new society's oracle. [FN3]

We can think of Rushdie's novel as a special application of the "epoche" used by phenomenologists: it temporarily places the nonfictional world in brackets the better to reveal its hidden characteristics. Even my initial summary of Rushdie's novel suggests two of these characteristics. The first is that societies are primarily composed of "voices." The second is that each of these voices, and hence society itself, is a dynamic or dialogic hybrid: each voice is shot through with the rest, and each contests for audibility with the others that have helped to constitute it. [FN4]

*728 Even before we examine the notion of voices and their dialogic hybridity more closely, we can recognize their philosophical and political merit. Phenomenologically, we never encounter ourselves apart from a dialogue, either with our own self or with others. When we wake, we are already involved in an exchange that will continue throughout the day, switching interlocutors and topics, but always pulling us along in its train. Much else goes on inside and outside us besides speech, but we register these things in terms of what we can or cannot say about them, whether in poetry or prose. The hybridity of our voices or Rushdie's "multitude in each 'I'" is equally apparent in our experience: we often hear ourselves sounding like our parents or other figures that have been significant for us. This cacophony, its demands as well as its richness, is brought out by another writer, James Joyce, in his description of the voices that contend for audibility within the soul of his character, Stephen Dedalus: those of his father and schoolmasters urge Stephen to be a "gentleman," those of the gymnasium to be "manly and healthy," of the national revival to be "true to his country," of worldliness to "raise up his father's fallen estate by his labors," of schoolmates "to be a decent fellow . . . and do his best to get free days for the school," and, finally and most satisfying to Stephen, the welcome words of

"phantasmal comrades" who provide escape from the "hollow sounding voices" of the others. [FN5]

The notion of an interplay of voices also appeals to our political sensibilities. It brings to mind a democracy that is a "form of life" rather than simply a set of procedures for a smooth transition of power. As such a form, it valorizes heterogeneity as well as the dialogic contest for audibility among the social body's participants. [FN6] These experiences and *729 political considerations lend force to Rushdie's suggestion that we are primarily voices and creatures of dialogue, and that society is a unity paradoxically composed of diversity - that it is what I will later call a "multi-voiced body."

But Rushdie's use of a "mind reader" as the setting for the Midnight's Children National Conference is a literary device and requires more philosophical elaboration before we can march from fiction back to actual societies. Some of this elaboration is readily provided by Mikhail Bakhtin's thoughts on language. [FN7] Bakhtin claims that language "is unitary *730 only as an abstract grammatical system of normative forms," [FN8] that is, only in grammar books or traditional linguistic theory. Outside of these esoteric realms, language is a plethora of intersecting "social languages":

> [A]t any given moment of its historical existence, language is heteroglot from top to bottom: it represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles, and so forth, all given a bodily form. These "languages" of heteroglossia intersect each other in a variety of ways, forming new socially typifying "languages." [FN9]

According to this view, each of these social languages is a "concrete socio-linguistic belief system" [FN10] or "voice." [FN11] More specifically, each is a "form" for conceptualizing its surroundings in words and is "characterized by its own objects, meaning and values." [FN12] These social languages are also reflexive and evaluative, each "a particular point of view on the world and on oneself . . . the position enabling a person to interpret and evaluate his own self and his surrounding reality." [FN13] Social languages are therefore more like Nietzschean "value-creating powers" than neutral, abstract patterns bendable to the will of independent subjects.

Bakhtin uses his notion of "hybridization" in order to explain the intersection or interplay of these languages of heteroglossia. He defines hybridization as "a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter, within the arena of an utterance, between two different linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another by an *731 epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor." [FN14] In parody, for example, the representing voice introduces its "semantic intention" or meaning into another person's discourse and forces that discourse to serve its, the representing voice's, opposing view of their common subject matter. [FN15] Thus Rushdie represents the Sinai family as socially pretentious when its members speak to a British acquaintance in an Oxfordian rather than in a vernacular form of English. He thereby subordinates them and their social language - Indians-talking-like-upper-class-Brits - to his own more equalitarian voice. [FN16]

Even when an utterance exhibits only one social language, the latter is tacitly "rendered in the light of another language." [FN17] For example, Rushdie never critically discusses the idea of an authentic English language or of a pure Indian culture in Midnight's Children. But his refashioning of English language and style throughout his book - what he calls his "Angrezi" - tacitly involves and is informed by a damning "sideward glance" [FN18] at both of these ideals of purity. [FN19] Indeed, the fictional quality of *732 Rushdie's book and of all novels is tacitly formed in light of their unstated contrast with

the "real" world, just as the notion of the latter - the "real world" - makes an implicit reference to fictional or other possible versions of itself.

Using Bakhtin's notion of hybridization to clarify the meaning of Rushdie's voices puts us in a position to articulate an initial view of society as a multi-voiced body. According to this view, voices are not univocal in the sense of Kant's universal "voice of reason," [FN20] Husserl's "pure expressions" of meaning, [FN21] or Heidegger's medium for a language that is "the house of the truth of Being" and ultimately a gathering or "one." [FN22] Instead, all the voices of society are hybridized social languages. Each resounds in the others; each is at once part of the identity and the other of the rest, that is, simultaneously immanent and transcendent in relation to the others. [FN23] Moreover, the idea of a multi-voiced body shares an affinity with Nietzsche's notion of "value-creating powers," Foucault's "power-resistance," Deleuze and Guattari's "deterritorializations" and "reterritorializations," and a number of other depictions of society as a struggle among competing forces. [FN24] But the notion of voices is less *733 anonymous than that of "forces." We can recognize ourselves in voices. And once we have identified corporate globalization and other "abstract" structures with social languages, that is, once we have demystified them and traced them back to their flesh and blood sources, we can challenge them for control of our lives. [FN25]

We would be wrong to think of the multi-voiced body as just an interplay that simultaneously separates and holds its participating voices together in a paradoxical community of differences. It is this form of dialogic solidarity, it is this type of interactional "body," but it is also the continuous production of new voices. Thus Rushdie's desire to represent the broken Hindi of a battlefield scavenger forces him to produce a new version of English: "I sell many so-fine thing. You want? Medicine for constipation, damn good, ho yes. I have. Watch you want, glowing in the dark? I also have. And book ho yes, and joke trick, truly. I was famous in Dacca before. Ho yes, most truly. No shoot." [FN26] Both standard English and Indian multilingual culture play a constitutive role in this new social language; they also remain alive within it and contest each other and their progeny for audibility. To leap to another part of the world for a moment, and to illustrate this production of new voices once more, the mestizo culture of Mexico is still a creative tension between the European and indigenous heritages from which it was initially forged. We can ask what new voices will emerge from the current struggle between Mexican mestizos, on the one hand, and the Chiapan Indian groups that resist them, on the other. The Mexican historian Adolfo Gilly speculates that this struggle could give rise to modernity that includes and promotes, rather than destroys, what he refers to as "innumerable arborescent histories." [FN27]

*734 The creation of new social languages of this sort immediately brings about a revision - but never a synthesis - of the other voices participating in society's dialogue. They are seen in a new light, heard in a new way, just as a new color would alter the standard ones, or a new sex would change the meaning of male and female. The national literatures of England, India, and elsewhere take on a new cast with the advent of cross-national, cross-cultural novels such as Rushdie's; Mexico's indigenous past as well as its present ethnic composition acquire a new meaning in light of the Zapatista rebellion. The being of the multi-voiced body is therefore its continuous metamorphosis as well as the intersection of its many heterogeneous voices - its generativity and novelty as well as its social solidarity.

Rushdie and Bakhtin never spell out the relation of voices to subjects. [FN28] But it is clear from experience that voices have priority over subjects as well as language. In speaking, we transform the abstract patterns of language into voices. These voices, however, immediately establish the parameters of our existence and our status as participants in the dialogic movement that characterizes the social body. As participants in that movement, we are always "ahead of ourselves" and find that we always have

more to say or see than our immediate utterances and perceptions suggest. We are too much the voices that we articulate for one to say that they are anonymous and that we are fully subordinate to them; but they are too much ahead of us, bound up with one another, for one to claim that we are in complete control of them or that we could ever know them, and hence ourselves, exhaustively. We provide them with a place on the earth, an anchorage, and at the same time they pull us up into their orbit. In philosophical terms, our identity with them is elliptical rather than *735* complete or logically strict; enough to temper their anonymity, but not enough to erase their primacy and the creative, sometimes fearful, interplay into which they hurl us. [FN29]

Within each of these dialogically related voices, the relation between language and perception (or the other non-linguistic modes of a subject) is what Deleuze and Guattari call "reciprocal presupposition." [FN30] Because a voice sets out the trajectory for both saying and perceiving, these two dimensions are relevant for and inseparable from one another. But perceiving can move ahead of saying in what it reveals of our surroundings - even disrupting or transforming whatever discourse is in play at the time; [FN31] and saying can affect what we do and are able to perceive, often opening up a space for new perceptions. A poignant experience, for example, twists the poet's idiom into new expressions; and a new way of speaking about things reveals aspects of the world that we had not previously noted.

Because voices are dialogic hybrids, each of us entertains multiple worlds of both perception and speech - in Rushdie's words, each of us "contains a multitude." Chaos is avoided because one social language or voice stands out from the rest at any given site of embodiment. Nonetheless, all the social languages that play a constituting role in the establishment of that voice and still contest within it for audibility are part of its identity as well as its other. Depending on a person's social history, these other social languages have different saliencies in relation to, and hence influence on, the voice that is characteristic of that person. Even when we speak the same social language, therefore, we manifest a certain uniqueness despite and because of our hybrid identity.

736 Although both perception and language are components of our expanded notion of voice, self-reflexivity gives language priority over perception and contributes to the primacy of voices over subjects. The complex syntax of a social language permits it to make itself and its subject matter an object of further commentary. Thus Rushdie uses English to transform it into his Angrezi and India into the object of his novel. The importance of this self-reflexivity of language is also evident when we consider it in conjunction with economic systems, governmental institutions, and other social structures. Social structures always include linguistic as well as non-linguistic dimensions. The linguistic dimension converts social structures into voices and lifts them into a realm of self-reflexivity, just as these structures, in turn, along with our bodies, anchor voices in a material world. Because of this self-reflexivity, the social structures can be transformed into objects of discussion and possible change. In the midst of the industrial age, Marx was therefore able to transform capitalism into an object of critical reflection, imagine an alternative to it - a society without social classes - and then issue his famous call for unity among the workers of the world.

The reference to Marx here is appropriate for another reason. By converting social structures into voices, we have also overcome orthodox Marxism's bifurcation of society into a base-structure and superstructure. [FN32] Furthermore, social structures, like those who participate in them, are also hybrids. Capitalism is shot through with entitlement programs, national transportation systems, and other alternative economic structures. Capitalism is also established in part through its negating sideward glance at the various forms of socialism. This hybridity at least leaves open the possibility that capitalism might eventually be trumped by one of the other economic voices that clamor

within it or by a new system that would emerge from the interplay of these different economic languages. [FN33]

737 Rushdie's Midnight's Children National Conference captures the positive side of the notion of a multi-voiced society, particularly its solidarity and continual metamorphosis. But this body is always threatened by, and in Rushdie's novel, defeated by a negative tendency that is part of society as well. Not only do the children of midnight begin to take on the prejudices of their parents, but Saleem's chief nemesis, Shiva, tells him that the Midnight Children's National Conference can never be a "third principle" between "money-and-poverty"; the endless fight between money-and-poverty is all there is. [FN34] Indeed, Shiva has the special ability to crush enemies with his huge knees. In reaction to Saleem's valorization of free expression, Shiva proclaims that the Midnight's Children National Conference should be run on the basis of the rule that he uses to control the members of his street gang: "Yah, little rich boy: one rule. Everybody does what I say or I squeeze the shit outta them with my knees!" [FN35] But Shiva is only an adjunct to a far greater power confronting Saleem and the children of midnight: the Widow, that is, Indira Gandhi, her National Congress Party and oppressive Emergency decree of 1975-77, and, at least in the novel, her sterilization of the children of midnight and destruction of their special powers. Rushdie's Saleem realizes that the Widow can only see the multiplicity and dialogic hybridity of the children's social languages as a threat to her centralism and unitary voice: Indira is India, India Indira. [FN36] Not only are the children of midnight and their composed chaos destroyed, but Saleem Sinai himself, this person who has been "so-many too-many persons," [FN37] sees clearly that the Widow and her cohorts will "trample [him] underfoot," reducing him and the hundreds of millions of voices resounding in his head to "specks of voiceless dust." [FN38] For "it is the privilege and the curse of midnight's children to be both masters and victims of their times, to forsake privacy and be sucked into the annihilating whirlpool of the multitudes, and to be unable to live or die in peace." [FN39]

Although Rushdie ends his book pessimistically, he gives the impression that he is hinting at an alternative to India's and the world's penchant for ethnic cleansing and other forms of political exclusion. As in *738* Bakhtin's hybridization, Rushdie introduces his "semantic intention" into the events and outcomes that take place in the novel and suggests a meaning that might provide us with some hope. We can capture this meaning by showing how identifying society as a multi-voiced body provides an explanation of, and then an antidote for, the tendency in history to deny or negate the creative interplay among the voices of society. The explanation involves an unconscious dimension of the multi-voiced body - a low grade endogenous anxiety, a fear of being overwhelmed by the many voices resounding within our own and the community, the ancient fear of Babel. When this anxiety is exacerbated by war, plague, scarcity or other exogenous dangers, society often gives itself over to "oracles," that is, to "the one true God," the "pure race," market fundamentalism, or other rigid ideas of identity that deny the social body's heterogeneity and the primacy of the creative tension among its constituent discourses and institutions. [FN40] In its extreme forms, the rigidity that results from this increased fear of Babel is complicit in genocide, systematic rape, mutilation of living and dead bodies, as well as other forms of violence that cannot be fully explained by the desire to achieve economic or national self-interests.

Fortunately, we are able to remember or recognize the dimension of ourselves - the other voices resounding in our own - that oracles deny during times of fear and repression. This counter-memory can provide the spur necessary to continue critique and political activism on the path toward undermining oracles and revitalizing the heterogeneity and creative powers of the multi-voiced body. It urges us toward Rushdie's Midnight's *739* Children National Conference and the transformation of Hegel's "life and death" struggle between masters and slaves into an approximation of Nietzsche's "life affirming" contest among "controverting gods," that is "an eternal fleeing and seeking of each other again of

many gods, as the happy controverting of each other, conversing again with each other, and converging again of many gods." [FN41]

In practical terms, this transformation is expressed by a principle of justice that valorizes the equal audibility of all voices. This sociopolitical ideal of equal audibility is derived from our mutual involvement in one another's identity: the affirmation of our own voice is necessarily a valorization of the other voices that are simultaneously immanent in and transcendent of our own. Because these voices are immanent in one another, the affirmation of any one of them is a tacit endorsement of the multi-voiced body, the interplay (and not just the plurality) of its participants, and the ongoing metamorphosis of society. Because each of these voices also transcends (is the "other" of) the rest, this affirmation of their social solidarity or mutual immanence is simultaneously a celebration of society's heterogeneity.

The solidarity of the multi-voiced body also involves some necessary limits which happen to be beneficial. It legitimates withholding a policymaking role (though not audibility) from racist, sexist, and other politically exclusionary doctrines. These doctrines deny their hybridity and hence their roots in the multi-voiced body. They attempt to undermine the creative heterogeneity of society and would destroy the source of their own and our social languages. We cannot therefore justifiably cede power to or affirm them, even though hearing them is inescapable, even if only as voices that we reject.

Rushdie raises another problem for the notion of a multi-voiced body. When his character Saleem Sinai is an older man, he worries that his attempt to write about his life and times is an example of the "Indian disease . . . to encapsulate the whole of reality." [FN42] Is the identification of *740 society with a multi-voiced body just another instance of this Indian disease, one that we have been warned against by Derrida, Foucault, and a plethora of postmodernists? I would claim that this identification, including the principle of justice or equal audibility that goes with it, are at once an oracle and an anti-oracle, simultaneously utopian and anti-utopian. It is utopian because it indicates a direction or end for political critique and action: an interplay of equally audible voices. It is anti-utopian because it makes an impossible demand upon us and because it commits itself to the demise of any of its particular versions.

The impossible demand is that all the voices be equally audible at once - a condition under which we would not be able to hear any of them. When we reduce this impossible demand to the more reasonable one that asks only for an approximation to the ideal of equal audibility, we realize that it commits us to hearing the other voices of society in a way that puts our own social language at risk of revision and even replacement as a leading articulation of the idea of a multi-voiced body and its principle of justice. It commits us, in other words, to valorizing the very conditions, the simultaneous solidarity and metamorphosis of society, that transforms this sociopolitical ideal into a lure for new articulations of itself. It differs from a Kantian regulative ideal or a phenomenological horizon in that it invites divergent rather than convergent versions of itself, new voices rather than closer approximations to an old truth. Although the joint idea of a multi-voiced body and its principle of justice acts as a disrupter of any pretender that would attempt to justify permanent occupation of its throne, it differs from "messianic" versions of this disruption: [FN43] rather than being an empty signifier that precludes any attempt to fill it and that is never more than a just a rejection of totalizations, the idea of the multi-voiced body demands divergent articulations of something more definite, dialogic hybridity. It *741 calls for divergent versions of that reality and not of some other subject matter.

The definiteness of the social-political ideal of the multi-voiced body and its solicitation of divergence rather than convergence guards against its being taken as transcendent or as an object of worship or any other form of subservience. Instead, it galvanizes us to

celebrate its solidarity and generativity through participating creatively in the interplay of its voices, that is, through hearing other voices and thereby contributing to the production of new social languages and to the ongoing metamorphosis of society. The multi-voiced body does not promise immortality, but the voices or social languages to which we have contributed will continue on long after we have ceased to form words. We can emphasize this point and come to a close by citing once more the Russian thinker, Mikhail Bakhtin, who has contributed so much to this reflection on Rushdie's Midnight's Children:

> There is neither a first nor a last word and there are no limits to the dialogic context (it extends into the boundless past and the boundless future). Even past meanings, that is, those born in the dialogue of past centuries, can never be stable (finalized, ended once and for all) - they will always change (be renewed) in the process of subsequent, future development of the dialogue. At any moment in the development of the dialogue there are immense, boundless masses of forgotten contextual meanings, but at certain moments of the dialogue's subsequent development along the way they are recalled and invigorated in renewed form (in a new context). Nothing is absolutely dead: every meaning will have its homecoming festival. [FN44]

Footnotes:

[FNa1]. Fred Evans is Professor of Philosophy and Coordinator for the Center of Interpretive and Qualitative Research at Duquesne University. He is the author of Psychology and Nihilism: A Genealogical Critique of the Computation Model of Mind (1993) and co-editor of Chiasms: Merleau-Ponty's Notion of "Flesh" (2000). He has published articles on a number of continental thinkers in relation to issues concerning psychology, politics, and technology. He is currently working on another book, The Multi-Voiced Body: Society, Communication, and the Age of Diversity.

[FN1]. Salman Rushdie, Midnight's Children 271-74 (Penguin Books 1980).

[FN2]. Id. at 458.

[FN3]. Id. at 306.

[FN4]. Both of these characteristics are increasingly appealed to in the literature and rhetoric of what we might call the age of diversity. In the Americas alone, Whitman and Melville, and then the Black writers Hughes and Ellison, speak of voices resounding in one another. This sentiment is echoed in the Mexican Zapatistas' valorization of their political organization as a "network of voices . . . recognizing itself to be different in the tonalities and levels of the voices which form it." See Walt Whitman, Song of Myself, in The Oxford Book of American Verse 308 (F.O. Matthiessen ed., 1950); Herman Melville, Redburn 169 (1969); Langston Hughes, Theme for English B, in The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes 410 (Arnold Rampersad & David Roessel eds., 1995); Ralph Ellison, Invisible Man 577 (1952); Subcomandante Marcos, Dignity's Revolt, Statement in Chiapas, Mexico (Mar. 1996), in Zapatista!: Reinventing Revolution in Mexico (John Holloway & Eloina Pelaez eds., 1996), at 112.

[FN5]. James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, in The Portable James Joyce 332-33 (Harry Levin ed., 1946).

[FN6]. Another advantage of this appeal to voice concerns the latter's flexibility and specificity. The notion of voice can include civilizations and cultures as well as all the arts, professional lingoes and practices, religions, and other social languages and practices

that make up and cross over these larger designations. The association of voices with discourses and their logics also means that they demand a specification that the vaguer terms "civilization" and "culture" can often slip away from. For an example of the type of problem that occurs in using these vaguer terms, see Samuel Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order (1996); Seyla Benhabib, Criticism of His Univocal Notion of Civilization, in The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era 187-88 n.2 (2000). Benhabib argues, correctly, that Huntington speaks of the porosity of civilizations but then treats them in an essentialist manner when he uses them as an explanation "for global conflict and international realignments." Id. Note that this view of hybrid voices also implies that we should not accept either of the two traditional ways in which thinkers have characterized society - as a subject or substance that dominates all the other elements of which it consists or as reducible to a plurality of individuals. An example of the first alternative is Rousseau's "general will," which is directed to a univocal and common good for everyone from the beginning: "the general will . . . always looks to the public good." 2 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract 38 (Willmoore Kendall trans., 1954) (the people, poorly instructed, "do not always see what is good for it"). Another example is Hegel's "absolute spirit," which ultimately brings back together under its sovereignty what it initially, in order to gain epistemological certainty, separated from itself:

For the self-knowing Spirit, just because it grasps its Notion, is the immediate identity with itself which, in its difference, is the certainty of immediacy, or sense-consciousness - the beginning from which we started. This release of itself from the form of its Self is the supreme freedom and assurance of its self-knowledge.

G.W.F. Hegel, The Phenomenology of Spirit 491 § 806 (A.V. Miller trans., 1977). An example of the other alternative - society as a plurality of individuals - is Hobbes' war of each individual against each in the "state of nature" and their self-imposed submission to a sovereign in "civilization": "[I]t is manifest that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war is every man against every man." Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan 76 (Edwin Curley ed., 1994). These individuals agree to a "social contract" only as a means to better preserve each of them as an individual and not because of any intrinsic bond between them or Rousseauian "general will" that would reflect such a bond. Id. at 106. Another example of this alternative is Locke's "equal and independent," "rights possessing" individuals who, through reason, can obey a natural moral law in the state of nature and extend it to justify written law and majority rule when they form civil societies. 2 John Locke, Second Treatise of Civil Government and Letter on Toleration ch. 6 (G.W. Gough ed., 1948); id. vol. 9, ch. 124; id. vol. 8, ch. 96.

[FN7]. Mikhail Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination (Caryl Emerson & Michael Holguist trans., 1981); Mikhail Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics (Caryl Emerson & Michael Holguist trans., 1984); Mikhail Bakhtin, Speech Genres and Other Late Essays (Vern W. McGee trans., Caryl Emerson & Michael Holguist eds., 1986).

[FN8]. Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, supra note 7, at 288.

[FN9]. Id. at 291; see id. at 273, 365.

[FN10]. Id. at 356. English, Spanish, Lao, Russian, and other "national languages" are languages spoken within a demarcated territory and single government; as such, they are as much social languages as the more specific discourses that are articulated within them. Id. at 288-91.

[FN11]. For a discussion of Bakhtin's notion of voice that relates it to current studies of language by psychologists and linguists, see James V. Wertsch, Voices of the Mind: A Sociocultural Approach to Mediated Action (1991). Bakhtin often speaks of voice as including "personality" and defines it explicitly in his notes as including "height, range,

timbre, aesthetic category (lyric, dramatic, etc.) . . . [and] a person's worldview and fate." Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics, supra note 7, at 293. One of our main tasks will be to provide a full characterization of voice or, because they exist only in relation to each other, "voices." Bakhtin sometimes refers to social languages as "form-shaping ideolog[ies]." Id. at 97.

[FN12]. Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, supra note 7, at 292; see id. at 382, 356.

[FN13]. Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics, supra note 7, at 47 (emphasis omitted).

[FN14]. Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, supra note 7, at 358; see also id. at 304. Hybridization takes two forms, "intentional" and "organic." The intentional form involves the explicit representation of two social languages or voices in an utterance. I will not belabor this distinction here. Bakhtin sometimes refers to hybridization as "dialogized hybridization." He explicitly uses the term "dialogized heteroglossia" in only two passages. Id. at 272-73. In these, he introduces it in connection with the opposition between "heteroglossia" and "monoglossia." Gary Saul Morson & Caryl Emerson, Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics 143 (1990) (using this term to cover all utterances; for Bakhtin clearly holds that all utterances involve directly a contestation among different voices or languages, and thus the term usefully summarizes the major point of his linguistics).

[FN15]. Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics, supra note 7, at 193.

[FN16]. Rushdie, supra note 1, at 110, 113. Similarly, Irigaray's notion of "mimicry" is a strategy for converting the phallocentric subordination of the feminine into an affirmation of "two lips touching," that is, a plurality of mutually resounding voices. Luce Irigaray, This Sex Which Is Not One 76, 209 (Catherine Porter trans., 1985). The same is true of Gilroy's description of how the "double consciousness" of W.E.B. Du Bois and other black intellectuals turned European Enlightenment thought to some advantage for those blacks originally displaced by whites during the Black Diaspora. See Paul Gilroy, The Black Atlantic 48 (1993).

[FN17]. Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, supra note 7, at 362; see Bakhtin, Speech Genres, supra note 7, at 92.

[FN18]. This "sideward glance" is one of Bakhtin's technical terms. See Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, supra note 7, at 196.

[FN19]. So pervasive is hybridization in either its intentional or unintentional form that Bakhtin declares every utterance to be an example of it. Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, supra note 7, at 272. The languages of religion and materialism are another example of organic hybridization. They have formed themselves in light of and in opposition to one another, from the early clashes of spiritualism and materialism, through the struggle between religion and science during the Enlightenment, to the more recent debates between creationists and evolutionists.

[FN20]. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Judgment, at lv, 59, 111 (Werner S. Pluhar trans., 1987). "[T]he mind listens to the voice of reason within itself, which demands totality for all given magnitudes, even for those that we can never apprehend in their entirety . . ." Id.

[FN21]. See 1 Edmund Husserl, Logical Investigations 280 (J.N. Findley trans., 1970) (showing the distinction between "expression" and "indication"); see also Jacques Derrida, Speech and Phenomena 43, 45 n.4 (David B. Allison trans., 1973). For a full and

insightful treatment of the issue concerning expression and indication in the context of Derrida's deconstruction of Husserlian phenomenology, see Leonard Lawlor, Derrida and Husserl: The Basic Problem of Phenomenology, ch.7 (2002).

[FN22]. Martin Heidegger, Letter on Humanism, in Basic Writings 193-242 (David Farrel Krell ed., 1977).

[FN23]. Because each voice involves a social language that is a dialogic hybrid of the other social languages of society, it forms a social body with the others that is more down to earth - closer to the experience of our engagement with one another - than a "saying" that can never be said or a community of mutually "exposed" singularities that are either prior to address in language or restricted to merely "being-called" in language. Emanuel Levinas, Otherwise than Being 45-48 (Alphonso Lingis trans., 1981); Giorgi Agamben, The Coming Community 10 (Michael Hardt trans., 1993); see also id. at 1. Nancy also refers to his finitudes as singularities. See Jean-Luc Nancy, The Inoperative Community 27-29 passim (1991).

[FN24]. Friedrich Nietzsche, Genealogy of Morals (1887); Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus (1988); Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison (Alan Sheridan trans., 1979); Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality, An Introduction (R. Hurley trans., 1978); Fred Evans, Witnessing and the Social Unconscious, 3 Studies Prac. Phil.: J. Ethical & Pol. Phil. 57-83 (2003); Fred Evans, Lyotard, Foucault, and "Philosophical Politics," in The Art of the Possible: Essays on Lyotard, Art and Politics (Adam Geczy & Nicholas Strobbe eds., forthcoming 2005); Fred Evans, Lyotard, Bakhtin, and Radical Heterogeneity, 8 Continental Phil. 61-64 (2003); Fred Evans, Genealogy and the Problem of Affirmation in Nietzsche, Foucault, and Bakhtin, 27 Phil. & Soc. Criticism 41-65 (2001); Fred Evans, "Solar Love": Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty, and the Fortunes of Perception, 31 Continental Phil. Rev. 171-93 (1998); Fred Evans, Language and Political Agency: Derrida, Marx, and Bakhtin, 28 S.J. Phil. 249-66 (1990).

[FN25]. As we will see, not only does the notion of voice capture both the more anonymous and the more personal side of the social body's participants, it does so without reverting to the traditional or "humanistic" notion of the subject that results in what Foucault calls "subjected sovereignties." See Foucault, Discipline and Punish, supra note 24, at 221-22.

[FN26]. Rushdie, supra note 1, at 445. This example and the subject of Rushdie's "Angrezi" is discussed in detail by Michael Gorra. See Michael Gorra, After Empire: Scott, Naipaul, Rushdie 137-38 (1997).

[FN27]. Adolfo Gilly, Chiapas and the Rebellion of the Enchanted World, in Rural Revolt in Mexico 312 (Daniel Nugent ed., 1998). For a full discussion of this example, see Fred Evans, Voices of Chiapas: The Zapatistas, Bakhtin, and Human Rights, 42 Phil. Today 196-210 (2000).

[FN28]. In his discussion of hybrid social languages, Bakhtin avoids attributing autonomy to either subjects or language. He criticizes the view that language is a mere instrument used by subjects to express their thoughts, and he rejects equally the claim that language is a set of universal forms and rules to which subjects must conform. In attempting to avoid these extremes, however, he seems merely to skate back and forth between them. For example, he says that dialogue is "a struggle among socio-linguistic points of view, not an intra-language struggle between individual wills or logical contradictions." Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, supra note 7, at 273. But then, as we saw earlier, he mentions "the speaker's speech will" and how it "is manifested primarily in the choice of a particular speech genre." Bakhtin, Speech Genres, supra note 7, at 78. He

therefore presents us with subjects that both are and are not subordinated by language, and does not explain how this prima facie self-contradiction can be escaped. Perhaps Bakhtin's point is that subjects are subordinated to social languages but, within these forms, can willfully pick out the speech genres they wish to use. But if that is his point, then we are back to the question of the relation between subjects and their social language: does agency reside in the language (and the subject is just the "site" of or vehicle for a social language), or does agency reside in subjects (and language is merely their instrument)?

[FN29]. We must understand ourselves as the agent and vehicle of our voices at once, as distinguishable from, another side of, but not separable from the voices we articulate. Our existence as voices lies between the anonymity of a social language and the personal life of a subject. These two alternatives are the idealized "limits" of voice rather than its reality. Considered from "below," voice is a subject, performing individualized or personal activities; considered from "above," voice is a social language or abstract pattern. But "in itself," a voice is the basic unit of society, irreducible to yet inseparable from the components - subjects and language - that simultaneously bring about it and their own transformation into participants in a multi-voiced body.

[FN30]. See Deleuze & Guattari, supra note 24, at 44, 66-67, 90-91, 108-09, 141, 145-47, 180, 213, 433-34, 502 (showing various uses of "reciprocal presupposition"); see Gilles Deleuze, Foucault 61-65, 67 passim (Sean Hand & Paul Bove trans., 1988). The term "reciprocal presupposition" is not used in Foucault, but the same idea is employed throughout the text.

[FN31]. For the ability of "the glance" to surprise us with glimpses of what lies outside the immediately expected, see Edward S. Casey, The World at a Glance, in Chiasms: Merleau-Ponty's Notion of Flesh (Fred Evans & Leonard Lawlor eds., 2000).

[FN32]. Marx was therefore right to speak of the "personification" of capital. 1 Karl Marx, Results of the Immediate Process of Production, in Capital 989-90 (Ernest Mandel ed., 1976).

[FN33]. We can also, with some imagination, incorporate Foucault's notions of power-knowledge and power-resistance into the multi-voiced body. Foucault, Discipline and Punish, supra note 24; Foucault, The History of Sexuality, supra note 24. Foucault provides a full discussion of his notion of power and his idea of the relation between power and knowledge in both these texts. Id. at 94-95 (tactics and strategies as "non-subjective" but "intentional"); Evans, Genealogy and the Problem of Affirmation, supra note 24 (discussing these notions in detail and critically); Marx, supra note 32 (regarding manufacturing and workers, see especially the sections on "The Working Day," "Co-operation," "Machinery and Modern Industry," and "Results of the Immediate Process of Production"); Foucault, Discipline and Punish, supra note 24, at 163-64 (referring to Marx's "The Working Day" in his own analysis of "docile bodies"); see also Fred Evans, To "Informate" or "Automate": The New Information Technologies and Democratization of the Work Place, 17 J. Soc. Theory & Prac. 409-39 (1991) (discussing Marx on labor power).

[FN34]. Rushdie, supra note 1, at 306-07, 308; id. at 515 (stating to understand the rivalry between Saleem and Shiva is to understand "the age in which you live.").

[FN35]. Id. at 263.

[FN36]. Id. at 501, 509.

[FN37]. Id. at 552.

[FN38]. Id.

[FN39]. Rushdie, supra note 1, at 552.

[FN40]. In a similar vein, Bakhtin speaks of societies in terms of a struggle between two opposing "forces." He calls the first force "monoglossia" and associates it with the development of a "unitary master language" and "the processes of sociopolitical and cultural centralization." Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, supra note 7, at 271. This language is not a system of abstract categories; it is, rather, a world view that ensures "a maximum of mutual understanding in all spheres of ideological life." Id. It would therefore presumably include national languages such as Chinese or Swahili, any national language that becomes the lingua franca of diplomacy and international meetings, the "literary language" of a culture, the "universal languages" of mathematics, logic, and computer programs, and Orwell's famous "Newspeak" in the novel 1984. Bakhtin names the second force "heteroglossia" and associates it with the stratification of social languages and the ongoing development of generational, professional, and other forms of social differentiation. Id. at 271-72. The centrifugal movement of heteroglossia stands in constant tension with the centripetal and homogenizing movement of monoglossia. The general meaning of "dialogized heteroglossia" refers to hybridization and the struggle among sociolinguistic points of view. But Bakhtin also gives it a more specific meaning: the permanent resistance of heteroglossia to monoglossia. As an example of this more specific meaning, Bakhtin points to the struggle for audibility by the lower social-economic groups of the Renaissance period in Europe against the hegemony of the language of the officials and upper classes.

[FN41]. Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, in The Portable Nietzsche 309 (Walter Kaufmann trans. & ed., 1968); G.W.F. Hegel, The Phenomenology of Spirit 113-14 (A.V. Miller trans., 1977) (explaining "the life and death struggle").

[FN42]. Rushdie, supra note 1, at 83-84. At various other junctures in the novel, moreover, Rushdie indicates that there are many rather than one truth. For example, his character Saleem Sinai, and even Shiva, concedes that they cannot say any one of the children of midnight's different magical skills is better than the others. Nonetheless, Saleem, with the help of another of the children, Parvati-the-witch, argues that his mind-reading power is necessary for the Midnight Children's Conference to take place and that therefore the rest of the children should at least acknowledge him as as "big brother." Id. at 83-84. Rushdie's tacit reference to Orwell's 1984 does not appear to be an accident. One is also reminded of Kurasawa's movie Roshoman, where the same event is seen and said as well as moralized in a number of ways. Bakhtin, too, adopts a perspectivist stance toward truth. He praises Dostoevsky's polyphonous novels, in which the author has no final word, over Tolstoy's homophony, in which the author passes over the opportunity for a dialogic relation with his characters and saves the last word - his word, his truth - for himself and the advancement of his great idea or social language. Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics, supra note 7, at 72, 81, 265; Morson & Emerson, supra note 14, at 236-37, 254. Bakhtin thinks that Tolstoy's novels are excellent examples of "monologic positions." Whereas Dostoevsky's books are "Galilean," Tolstoy's are part of the "Ptolemaic literary tradition," that is, "the absolutism of a single and unitary language." Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, supra note 7, at 366-67.

[FN43]. I have in mind Jacques Derrida's notion of the messianic. See Jacques Derrida, Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International 73, 167-68 (Peggy Kamuf trans., 1994); see Lawlor, supra note 21, at 219-25 (discussing Derrida's Messianic).

[FN44]. Bakhtin, Speech Genres, supra note 7, at 170.