her time by Virginia Woolf, but understood better through contemporary voices like Toril Moi and Sara Ahmed. Materialist methodological standpoint in feminist literary and social discourses has been aimed at looking at the text as a critical object of social transformation. This is the crux of the theoretical underpinnings of the frame of analysis Revelles-Benavente has essentially put across by correlating the world around the writer and their literary worldings of their female characters in their works. In the fifth chapter, "Visualizing Social Media: Toni Morrison's Work as an Affective Communicative Process," Revelles-Benavente materializes, quantifies and brings an empirical turn to the analysis of a narrative's affective and performative power over the reader-writer relationship. By analyzing Toni Morrison's work using two codification softwares, she uniquely puts to graphs and numbers the way in which worldings of an author generate emotional and social affectivity within the reader. By referring to the current posthumanist and relatively evergreen poststructuralist understandings of the feminist discourse, the author highlights the way close reading cuts across literary phenomenon and time-space frames to untangle the agential relationships around an individual. Chapter six, "The Cyborg and the Goddess: Intra-Acting Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and *Tar Baby* with Beyoncé's *Lemonade*," is a wonderful and truly courageous experimental analysis of the intra-active actions, roles, and modalities of the female spirit through the methodological tool of 'Intra-mat-extuality' (developed by the author in prior research).

The book is a treasure trove of direct, concise, practical, and realistic implementation of all the thought processes in the current shifts of theoretical progress in the academia. The book is very cleverly structured to posit the reader with the world of the author as a scholar in the realm of new materialist feminism. Through this wonderful book, any young researcher seeking to practice the current theoretical underpinnings with canonical and/or contemporary texts, will receive a needed guidance as a valid and reliable scholarly output.

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OVERDETERMINED: HOW INDIAN ENGLISH LITERATURE BECOMES ETHNIC, POSTCOLONIAL, AND ANGLOPHONE. By Ragini Tharoor Srinivasan. New York: Columbia University Press, 2025. 336 pp.

Ragini Tharoor Srinivasan's examination of the status of Indian English literature through the critical prism afforded by *accented reading* reveals how the field of literary studies in the U.S. negotiates ethnic and postcolonial identities. In the hands of the author, accented reading becomes a means of analysis of "the relationship between the burden of representation experienced by ethnic, postcolonial, and non-Western writers of Anglophone literature […] and the overdetermining interpellation experienced by the […] critics and scholars who study them" (1). The study is organised in a theory-in-praxis format, with 'case studies' alternating between treatment of major theorists and "recess" essays.

In a metacritical manner, the book details Srinivasan's experience of how the students and authors of Anglophone literature, especially in the context of South Asia, define, and are in turn defined by, the ethnic, postcolonial and Anglophone. She goes on to deconstruct the very whyness of their ambivalence towards Indianness, which is continually invoked by their work. Srinivasan's postcolonial literary inquiry is informed by her linguistically charged "accented reading," serving as a tool and methodology for her examination of the varied experiences of diasporic writers. The study selfreflexively invokes a set of archival figures (Bharati Mukherjee, Chetan Bhagat, Amit Chaudhuri and Jhumpa Lahiri) and exposes them to interspersed meditations on authorities in postcolonial literature like Spivak,

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Bhabha and Said, which allows her access to the plinth of the institutionalisation of literary pedagogy as well as multiethnic literature in America. Following is a brief account of the book's structure, its main arguments and a critical appraisal (adjusted to the scope and avaliable space of this review) of the contribution of the book to the debate on Anglophone literature and the question of accent.

At the outset, Srinivasan briefly recalls her experience as an Indian American undergraduate, which she rounds off (drawing on the authority of Spivak and Bhabha) by framing the book as an exercise in "resistance and disavowal and informancy" (xv) that examines the overdetermined literary objects as well as theorists (ix–xv). The first chapter parallels Kenneth Warren's thesis on the obsolescence of African American literature post-Jim Crow (45–46) as Srinivasan visualises the dissolution of multiethnic literature into a flattened and *white*washed universal programme of Americanness. While Mukherjee posits her literary output as "the epic narrative" (43) detailing her experience as an émigré, Srinivasan explores her "romance with the American language" (Raban qtd. in Srinivasan 50), a type of multiethnic ventriloquism, as a reason for the success of her short-story collection *Middleman and Other Stories* (1988) and her refusal to be called Indian reflecting in the absence of producing narrative acousticality (50–53). Another extension of Mukherjee's disavowal, touched upon by Srinivasan, is Jhumpa Lahiri's linguistic self-translation (read transportation/transposition) from English (or 'being Jhumpa Lahiri') to Italian (or "not being Jhumpa Lahiri") as her act of post-Anglophone renunciation and realignment against ethnic interpellation (179–180). This act could be seen by critics as a way of distancing that not only relieves pressures/expectations, but also allows her to get rid of the simplistic, almost proverbial identitarianism.

The chapter that follows harks back to her personal anecdotes and the generalising tendency in American academics of seeing South Asian women scholars as "wannabe Spivaks" (71–72). While this posits the tendency of the "academostar" (32) to overdetermine the critical/academic scenario of America under institutional pressures, Spivak's authority overflows her critical discourse, with her accent disrupting monologic norms and neutrality, and a space opens up for multilingual pedagogy as a way of nonidentifying "chosen othering" (Spivak qtd. In Srinivasan 80), an affirmative negativity. On the contrary, and as a response to "Spivak's pronunciation-policing," Srinivasan operates upon "Bhagat's 'English like Hindi'" (94) as something that baffled critics who did not see his "bad English" as a part of his artistic intention but as inherently *bad* (102). Bhagat's absence from university syllabi reflects elitist reluctance and inability to acknowledge his code-switching English/Hinglish as an artistic homage to the vernacular grammar. Moreover, Srinivasan warns against postcritical reading fetishising Bhagat's readership, which conflates accessibility with vernacular authenticity in such a way that an accented reading of Bhagat (with his agenda of depicting 'real' India) becomes detrimental (107–111). Srinivasan concludes by asserting risks in teaching Bhagat where a distinction should be made between vernacular English and English "like" vernacular (111–118). In the next two alternating recesses, Srinivasan examines the iconicity of Bhabha and Said: she reads critiques of Bhabha's "bad writing," "a charge that their writing is inaccessible beyond an elite coterie" (121). She situates Bhabha's "DissemiNation" (1990) within the aspirational hybridity of the 1990s and highlights the absence of a materialist nationalism. Bhabha is seen as a minor-key hope countering the crisis in humanities with his "implicative criticism" (128–130). As for Said, she breaks down his overdetermined Palestinian identity as a (paradoxical) posthumous icon in postcolonialism and a semipublic amateur asserting his exilic agency, exploring Said's "double perspective" of secular critique against nativism as well as the marginalisation of Palestine within postcolonial discourse (173–178).

Amit Chaudhuri's autofiction diverges from the 'graver' concerns and tropes of postcolonial fiction and instead invests in modernist mundanity that negates the presence of overriding national allegory (131–132). She examines Chaudhuri's select literary output to assess how the flattened voice of the domestic servants leaves room to interpret it as an ethical refusal of ventriloquism (147–149). In his other works, he exposes India's dual narrative as the presence-absence of accent, which in turn fosters a much-needed suspicion of referentiality among US students (160–165).

With her study alternating between literary case studies and theoretical 'recesses', the architecturality allows her to employ the model of accented reading, which has its roots in her experience of teaching non-Native writers of the English language, using texts prescribed in the syllabi of American universities. The text itself reads with accent: with a mixture of close analysis and anecdote, presented, for the most part, in the first-person plural, it pays homage to a reading that is not intent on pushing the accent to the background while ploughing through the chunkier sections of the text. The fact that the text itself resists such a reading highlights its commitment to the method outlined by Srinivasan. In the same stroke, the text archives accessibility, keeping its register open to students and researchers. Srinivasan's exercise in accented reading is in line with the interdisciplinary turn to "accent," something she previously dealt with in her co-edited volume *Thinking with an Accent: Toward a New Object, Method, and Practice* (2023). By considering major literary figures, Srinivasan points out their tendency to flatten their identity into self-inflicted assimilation that determines both how they write and how they are read by Western readers as well as the (often) marginal, postcolonial reader. *Overdetermined* can be summed up (at the risk of oversimplification) as a study that depicts how identity is inescapably (over)determined by accent, revealing broader power dynamics as it "offers a metacritical analysis of the pedagogy of Indian English literature in U.S. academe".

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THE PROBLEM OF GOD IN BUDDHISM. By Signe Cohen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2025. 74 pp.

Cohen's *The Problem of God in Buddhism* presents an insightful exploration into a paradoxical and fascinating aspect of Buddhist tradition, its relationship with divinity and the concept of God. As a part of the *Elements in the Problems of God* series edited by Michael L. Peterson, Cohen succinctly and comprehensively offer a profound exploration of Buddhism's complex relationship with the concept of divinity through a navigation of the nuanced theological terrain of Buddhist thought and addressing whether Buddhism can be classified as an atheistic religion, a spiritual philosophy, or something entirely distinct.

Cohen begins by situating Buddhism within its historical and philosophical context, tracing its origins to Siddhattha Gotama, the 5th-century BCE prince who became the Buddha, or "The Awakened One" (1). She outlines the core of Buddhist soteriology through the Four Noble Truths, which diagnose the human condition as one of dissatisfaction (*dukkha*) rooted in desire (*taṇhā*). As Cohen notes, "The four noble truths are not articles of faith in Buddhism, but, rather, from the Buddhist perspective, a prescription to cure the suffering of the world" (4). This medical analogy of likening the Buddha's teachings to a physician's diagnosis and remedy reinforces Cohen's argument that Buddhism adopts a pragmatic approach to alleviating suffering without reliance on divine intervention. She deepens this point by invoking a classical Buddhist thought: "When a person is struck by an arrow, the Buddha suggests, the important thing is to remove the arrow and alleviate his suffering, rather than worry about where exactly the arrow came from" (4).

One of the key themes of Cohen's analysis is Buddhism's rejection of an eternal self (*ātman*) and a creator god (*Īśvara*), which are concepts that are central to theistic traditions like Hinduism. She explains that Buddhist philosophy posits all phenomena, including humans, as impermanent aggregates (*khandhas*) of psycho-physical atoms (*dhammas*), "There is nothing eternal, insists Buddhism – not the self, and not even gods" (5). Deities such as *devas* and *brahmās*, while present in Buddhist cosmology, are impermanent beings trapped in the cycle of *saṃsāra*. Cohen vividly illustrates their

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