

Written On the Male Body.

A. Hollinghurst's *The Swimming-Pool Library*

Marcin Sroczyński
University of Warsaw

Abstract: Published in 1988, Alan Hollinghurst's debut *The Swimming-Pool Library* is undoubtedly his most carnal novel. The exclusively male characters of the story operate within a world where the usual social hierarchy of class, education, and economic status is suspended, or rather – renegotiated through the bias of another set of factors: condition of body, size of penis, sexual role etc. Certain categories, such as age or race, gain new importance and fresh meanings, and they create alternative power relations which result in unexpected shifts and minglings. Hollinghurst emphasises the dichotomies between the clashing spheres of the protagonists' lives: the "official", rational domain of the public (i.e. institutions, socialized selves, visible surfaces), and the "underground", untamed, dark realm of the body, rebellious and often ruthless in its pursuit of desires. The novel adds a historical dimension to the debate on male bodies by discussing the changing nature of "the homosexual form of existence" which realizes itself differently in the ideal of Ancient Greece, the romantic dream of the pre-war era, and the contemporary, commercialized exploitation of the body-machine, perfectionist, and pornographic.

Key words: Hollinghurst, *The Folding Star*, homosexuality, body, power relations

Upon its publication, Alan Hollinghurst's debut novel *The Swimming-Pool Library* caused a huge stir. Its publication year, 1988, was when Margaret Thatcher's government introduced a controversial addition to the Local Government Act of 1986, commonly referred to as "Section 28". The amendment stated that a local authority "shall not intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality"

or “promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship” (The National Archives 2016). This had direct implications for Hollinghurst’s novel, which the author acknowledges himself: as local councils were banned from spending money on anything said to promote homosexuality, “*The Swimming-Pool Library* was held up as an example of the sort of book that a public library might not be able to stock, which gave it a prominence it might not have had otherwise” (Hollinghurst 2011).

The reason why *The Swimming-Pool Library* drew so much attention is that, arguably for the first time ever, a mainstream British novel of undisputed literary value was openly dealing with male homosexuality in a graphic and unreserved way. The plot revolves around the main character’s unbridled promiscuity, and every chapter includes sexual content. *The Swimming-Pool Library*, winner of 1988 Somerset Maugham Award and 1989 American Academy of Arts and Letters E. M. Forster Award, is undoubtedly Hollinghurst’s most carnal novel. The aim of this paper is to show how the body functions as the organizing, pivotal element of the book, its meaning going far beyond the literal. Firstly, the plot emphasises the dichotomy between the public and private spheres of the characters’ lives. Just like the body is divided by cultural codes into parts that are visible, representative, and others that are intimate, shameful, and have to remain concealed, the “official” rational domain of the characters’ socialized and institutionalized selves is juxtaposed with the “underground”, the untamed realm of sexuality, a world governed by a different set of standards and values. Hollinghurst extends this division into spaces where the novel is set, creating two distinct universes in which the characters operate. Secondly, the characters’ bodies become the field on which relations of power are played because hierarchical divisions and personal evolutions are “embodied” and realized corporally. Finally, Hollinghurst uses the metaphor of the body to comment on the political and historical aspect of gay identities, and on the changing nature of “the homosexual form of existence”.¹ The author expresses a critical view on the contemporary gay culture, commercialized and pornographic.

¹ A term taken from Henning Bech’s 1997 book *When Men Meet* describing a number of features (i.e. recognitions, experiences, behaviours) which constitute the core of the homosexual collective identity (Bech 1997, 153).

1. The Two Worlds Apart

In an interview for *The Paris Review*, Hollinghurst admits that the opening page of his novels is always crucial to the whole structure of the book: "I've always had the feeling that the first page should somehow contain the whole book in nuce, that it should symbolize important things about the book, and this requires a great deal of calculation" (Hollinghurst 2011). This is definitely the case with *The Swimming-Pool Library*. The novel opens with a scene set in the London Underground. The narrator and protagonist, 25-year-old William Beckwith, is coming home on the last train. Opposite him sits a couple of London Transport maintenance men who are about to start work, and William wonders with amazement how their lives were "inverted": they become active when regular travellers go home and fall asleep. The description of their work is loaded with sexual innuendos: gangs of these men, with ... blow-lamps and long-handled ratchet spanners (Hollinghurst 2006, 1) move along the labyrinth of tunnels and sidings unknown to the commuter, and their activity remains invisible to the daily users of the tube. This image is a deliberate allusion to the gay cruising culture. Just like the tube is an alternative world for the workers, a flip-side of the "official" bright world, at night, parks and back streets become the realm of gangs of other men, who seek sexual gratification and act according to their instincts and codes of behaviour very different from those valid in their socialized lives. Hollinghurst makes the point that in the 1980s gay nightlife is still a clandestine, vampire-like existence. It is an alternative world that thrives on the margins of society and remains unseen by society. It is governed by desires and exposed to different dangers and disillusionments. In the underground scene, one of the workers catches the narrator's attention, as he is a "severely handsome black of about thirty-five" (1). Will starts fantasizing about the man; however, his disappointment is imminent as the man turns his hand over and reveals his wedding ring.

The London Underground is the first location in a series of settings that reveal their two-layered nature, the official utility doubled with surreptitious sexuality. The eponymous "swimming-pool library" is a slang term that Will and his friends coined for the changing-room of the swimming-pool in Wykeham prep school which Will attended. At thirteen, Will was appointed a librarian, a prefect responsible for the pool, and it was there that Will and the other boys had their first sexual experiences:

On summer nights ... three or four of us would slip away from the dorms and go with an exaggerated refinement of stealth to the pool. In the changing-room soap ... erased the violence of cocks up young bums. Fox-eyed, silent but for our breathing and the thrilling, gross little rhythms of sex – which made us gulp and grope for more – we learnt our stuff. ... Nipping into that library of uncatalogued pleasure was to step into the dark and halt (140–141).

The narrator admits that the nickname “library” was “a notion fitting to the double lives we led. ‘I shall be in the library,’ I would announce, a prodigy of study” (141). Will brought these habits into his adult life. The second swimming-pool important to the plot is the one in the Corinthian Club, where Will goes regularly to pick up boys. He describes it as “a gloomy and functional underworld full of life, purpose and sexuality” (9) and admits that more than once he “had ended up in a bedroom of the hotel above with a man [he] had smiled at in the showers.” Just like in the school years, the pool has a double nature, a secret, underlying purpose, and the most important things happen not in the actual pool, but in the back premises of the showers and changing-rooms.

Although Will is a man fully apprehending and even exploiting his homosexuality, the “double life principle” applies to all situations concerning his sex life. His first boyfriend, Arthur, hides in Will’s apartment for weeks after being involved in a crime, and none of Will’s friends know about what has happened. His second boyfriend, Phil, works and lives in an elegant hotel, but when they go to his room it is never through the main entrance. Hollinghurst highlights the dissonance between the civilized surfaces and the roughness of what hides beneath: upon his first visit to Phil’s, Will is shocked how the huge and elegant Edwardian façade of the hotel sharply contrasts with the undecorated plainness of its back parts, and the horrible area of store-rooms, rumbling boilers and ... laundry baskets [which] was like the subterranean parts of the worst schools we used to play matches against” (103). Other instances of the symbolically divided “two worlds apart” include Will’s visits to a porn cinema where one enters from the street by pushing back the dirty red curtain in the doorway and “this tussle with the curtain ... seemed [to Will] a symbolic act” (48). The cinema occupies the basement of a splendid house which for Will is a kind of emblem of gay life: “the *piano*

nobile elegant above the squalid, jolly *sous-sol*" (48). Finally, one of the key scenes of the book, when Will is sexually assaulted by Abdul, the Wicks's Gentlemen's Club cook, happens in the kitchen of the club. Will always entered the club through the main gate, and the hall with an "imposing stairway, lined with blackened, half-familiar portraits" (34). This time, however, he enters through the back door in "a narrow chasm" behind the building, making his way past trash "bins and milk-crates" hardly visible "in the alleyway's blackness" (261).

By spatially organizing the action of the novel in this particular way, Hollinghurst emphasises the unbridgeable gap between different areas of the protagonists' lives. The body and its pleasures do not belong to the social, official space, and Hollinghurst shows the tabooization of the body in contemporary Western culture by pushing it away from the public eye into the world of dingy, narrow streets, dark passageways, back corridors, and shabby basements. Not only does this world have a spatial distinctiveness, but it is also governed by a different set of rules. The usual hierarchy of class, education, and economic status is suspended, or rather – renegotiated through the bias of another set of factors related directly to the body. This has been acknowledged by several scholars. Henning Bech opens his book *When Men Meet: Homosexuality and Modernity* with a recount of Rita Mae Brown's expedition to a gay bathhouse:

She notices how the usual hierarchy is replaced here by another – condition of the body, size of penis, age – and the tension, competition, anxiety that go along with it; but also the possibility of total abandon in the darker rooms, of losing oneself in anonymity and carnal desire. ... She is struck by the silence and the direct way these men look at each other and engage in each other, but also by the security and the ease with which they accept refusal (Bech 1997, 1).

Dennis Altman praised the "democratic brotherhood" of gay bathhouses, "far removed from the male bondage of rank, hierarchy and competition that characterise much of the outside world" (Altman 1982, 79–80). In his article "Is the Rectum a Grave?" Leo Bersani replied to him by describing the gay bathhouse as

one of the most ruthlessly ranked, hierarchized, and competitive environments imaginable. Your looks, muscles, hair distribution, size of cock, and shape of ass determined exactly how happy you were going to be during those few hours, and rejection, generally accompanied by two or three words at most, could be swift and brutal, with none of the civilizing hypocrisies with which we get rid of undesirables in the outside world (Bersani 2010, 12).

Hollinghurst seems to adopt Bersani's rather than Alman's stance, and his main character operates according to clear principles: unattractive people have no place in Will's life, and they deserve no courtesy. Upon his visit to The Brutus Cinema, where "It was important to sit near the back ... but also essential to avoid the attentions of truly gruesome people" (49), Will is approached by "one of the plump, bespectacled Chinese youths who, with day-return businessmen and quite distinguished Oxbridge dons, made a haunt of places like this" (51). Will whispers to the boy "Leave off, will you," but when that does not work, he says loudly and firmly: "If you come anywhere near me again I'll break your neck" (52). On the other hand, in Will's world, certain features such as young age or black skin are on top of the hierarchy and result in palpable privileges. Will cherishes lower-class boys who may have no money or education but who are sexually attractive. This privilege does not, however, penetrate into the social sphere of Will's life, and does not make them equal. Will treats his boyfriends with care and tenderness proper to caring for children, or (at one instance) he likens his boyfriends to the servants that his aristocratic family had, but he never considers any of his boys as potential partners, they are basically not sophisticated enough. The two worlds stay apart.

2. Bodily Evolutions

As it was mentioned in the Introduction, Hollinghurst uses the metaphor of the body not only to show the dichotomies between the protagonists' social or official lives and their intimate lives, but also to illustrate their personal development and changing power relations. In fact, how Will evolves throughout the novel literally takes on a physical dimension and is reflected in what happens to his body. At the beginning of the narrative Will is quasi-omnipotent: confident in his beauty and charm, he spends his time picking

up teenage boys in nightclubs, parks, or at the swimming-pool. His interests in life are purely aesthetic, he only cares about his own and his boys' physical attractiveness. He is narcissistic, enamoured with his own image (he constantly looks in mirrors or at a favourite photograph of himself in which he is particularly good-looking). Will's personality is further revealed when he is contrasted with the second most important protagonist: the 83-year-old Lord Charles Nantwich. When Will meets Charles for the first time and helps him during a heart-attack incident, the episode only further boosts his self-esteem (he fancies seeing himself as a life-saving hero). Will looks down on other people, including Charles, who is old and clumsy, his only friend James, who is less attractive or successful, and his multiple lovers, whom he fancies but – as I have mentioned before – whom he does not consider sophisticated enough to become his partners.

When Will takes on the task of writing Charles' memoirs, he has no idea that he is being manipulated into a scheme. Will's conceit is played upon by Charles, who wants to educate the young man on the role that Will's grandfather played in persecuting homosexuals in the 1950s, and to burst his bubble of ignorance and illusion of power. Will suffers the first humiliation when he goes to the suburbs to find a boxing club where Charles' old friend, Bill Hawkins, is a coach. On the way he tries to pick up a local boy, but for the first time is rejected, as the boy says Will would have to pay to have "a nice piece of bum" like his. Will reacts with anger, resenting the boy's "ability to resist me, and that I had no power over someone so young" (134), but this episode actually reflects Will's uneasiness in a place clearly outside his world. It also signals his lack of knowledge (concerning Charles' support for young boxers including Bill) which foreshadows further compromising discoveries, as well as the beginning of his gradual loss of power.

The next episode is more poignant. Will goes to Sandbourne, an East End housing estate, to trace his fugitive black lover, Arthur. On the way there, he is "amazed it was the city where I lived" (169) and experiences a shock seeing a single-decker bus showing the destination Victoria and Albert Docks, as for him V&A could only be associated with art. He imagines romantic visions of an alternative childhood he would have had in the docks, full of sexy stevedores flexing their muscles and showing off their tattoos. On the train he is reading an elegant, limited edition of a classic piece of modernist, aesthetic literature, Ronald Firbank's *The Flower Beneath the Foot*, and his vision of the surrounding world is filtered through it. He creates his own fantasy

version of Arthur's world, which follows the same patterns of idealisation, falsification and distortion as the 19th and 20th century's visions of 'the Orient.' When he first notices a group of skinheads, they too evoke a phrase from Firbank - "Très gutter, ma'am" (170) - and, encouraged by his past sexual adventures with a skinhead in Camden, Will fantasizes about their rough sexuality. The dreaming tone of this passage ends abruptly. Will is assaulted and beaten up, and in a symbolic scene his precious book is destroyed by the perpetrators, smashed with a heavy boot seconds before the same boot slams Will's face to break his nose. The brutal scene of destroying the book and mutilating the body represents a turning point of confronting Will's fantasy world with reality. His identity is shaken and starts falling apart as he experiences a split between his inner world and the outside. He hears his own voice "as though they had played to [him] on a tape recorder" (172), and when the attacks happens, he repeats "It was actually happening. It was actually happening to me" (174). After his beauty is spoilt, he considers his "injured appearance unbearable," concluding: "I became the sort of person that someone like me would never look at" (176). When discrepancies appear between his self-image and the ideal he believes in, he loses coherence and stability of his subjective self.

Will's loss of security is compounded by a set of events: he learns about one of his former lovers, little Des, ending up in hospital after being burnt and tied up by a sadistic taxi driver, and about James getting arrested after a policeman seduced him to charge him with importuning. At the same time, while reading Charles' diaries, he discovers that in 1954 Charles was imprisoned on charges of homosexuality and the prosecutor who brought it about was Will's grandfather. When he understands Charles' scheme, he rushes to the Wicks's Club hoping to talk him, and there he runs into Abdul, the club's black cook and one of Charles' protégés. Will met him upon his first visit to Wicks's, and found him attractive and potentially applicable for his usual routine of having a socially inferior partner for a quick adventure. Abdul invites him to the kitchen and then "vehemently fucks him on the kitchen table." Hollinghurst meticulously describes Will's sensation of "gurgling with pleasure and grunting with pain, my cock chafing beneath me against the table's furred and splintered edge" (262). In this scene Will is subjugated and exploited, and his body is abused and objectified. For the first time throughout the novel he is penetrated only, and in a rough way: Abdul uses kitchen corn oil as lubricant, and after the quick and violent sex he tells Will

to "fuck off out of here" (262). Will is disrespected and castigated for his grandfather's deeds. It also turns out that Abdul is the son of Taha, who was Charles' servant and boyfriend while he worked in Sudan. Taha was brought to England and continued to work for Charles, but he was beaten to death by racists while Charles was in prison. Abdul's sexual assault can be read as a metaphor of a more general revenge on the oppression inflicted by Great Britain, both on homosexuals and on Britain's colonial subjects. Alan Sinfield comments on the scene: "it is as if the oppression of empire is being returned to its point of origin; the empire fucks back" (Sinfield 2001, 97).

Will's final destitution takes place when he decides to see Phil in the hotel where the latter works as a waiter. In the lobby he is attracted to a wealthy Argentinian guest, Gabriel, who invites him to his room. However, the lover turns out to be obsessed with pornographic conventions, costumes and sex toys. He dresses up in leather and wants to violate Will with a gigantic pink dildo (275). Again, Will is not in control of the situation, he is ridiculed and framed in a film-like grotesque situation. The scene is also a mocking comment on the 1982 Falkland conflict: at the beginning of the encounter Will feels apologetic about the British military offensive but Gabriel just responds "That's all right. You can suck my big cock" (274), as if the sexual service was supposed to compensate for Argentine's humiliation. However, when Will refuses to play along, Gabriel says: "I could whip you for what you did to my country in the war" (275). Again, a historical game of power relations is reduced to and realised upon Will Beckwith's body, just as British imperialism is reduced to the pornographic magazines which are produced in Argentina (a magazine called *Latin Lovers* is mentioned), but which Gabriel has to buy in Great Britain because they are unavailable back in his country. When Will finally escapes Gabriel and heads straight to Phil's room to comfort himself in "the only true, pure, simple thing I could see in my life at the moment, ... his love all bottled up and kept for me" (171), he discovers Phil naked with Bill Hawkins in an intimate and emotional pose. Abashed and disoriented, Will slowly withdraws, abandoned and compromised. This is how the plot draws to an end, but Will's body may yet suffer a final, terminal blow: the novel is set in a period just before the outbreak of AIDS, and the closing line of the story suggests that Will is not willing to change his hedonistic lifestyle.

3. Political Bodies

The last part of this paper discusses how *The Swimming-Pool Library* comments on the political and historical aspect of gay identities, and the changing nature of “the homosexual form of existence.” As the Argentinian episode has already shown, the body in Hollinghurst’s novel carries political connotations, which is also the case in the context of the discrepancy between the public and the private mode of living. In a speech entitled “Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street,” Judith Butler states:

[B]odies lay claim to a certain space as public space. ... [P]olitics is no longer defined as the exclusive business of public sphere distinct from a private one, but it crosses that line again and again. [Bodies] lay claim to the public, find and produce the public through seizing and reconfiguring the matter of material environments. ... [T]hey are themselves modalities of power, embodied interpretations, ... productive and performative (Butler 2011).

In fact, corporal and carnal relations between the protagonists may be interpreted in political terms, not only as games of personal hierarchies and subjugations, but as metaphors of imperial dominance. Will’s and Charles’ idealisation of black men has been denounced by David Alderson (2000, 32–33) as camouflaged disdain. The black boyfriends are admired for their ability to effortlessly combine innocence and sexuality but this actually means that they are idealised in their primitivism. This echoes the perceived primitivism of the colonised male subject, whose sexual potential is a result of attributing to him a greater degree of animality. One of the more controversial features of *The Swimming-Pool Library* is consistent objectification of black men, whether they become objects of Will’s opportunism or of Charles’ patronage (Sinfield 2001, 96).

The political signification of elderly Charles’ and young Will’s “sexual excursions into different racial communities” (Lane 1995, 230) may be understood in a broader sense – as a continuing British fantasy of a colonial splendour which finds its realisation in a stagnating attitude towards race and empire. Christopher Lane (1995, 230–231) argues that “at the heart of Hollinghurst’s novel is a profound crisis about Britain’s present and future identity” which stems from “a paralysing conviction about its imminent global rejuvenation that Salman Rushdie has derided as ‘the phantom twitching

of an amputated limb'". The ancient Roman Baths which can be found in Charles' basement can be interpreted as reminder of a sequence of colonisations (Sinfield 2001, 96) and also of "the transitory nature of Imperial power, no less true of the British Empire, of which Charles was a functionary, than of this Roman" (Cooper 2002, 197).

References to Greek and Roman heritage in *The Swimming-Pool Library* have more than one role: they reveal a continuity of gay subculture (the paintings on the Roman Bath's walls are of naked young men in homoerotic poses) but also the way in which admiration for the male body has evolved and historically changed. In Hollinghurst's novel, the beauty and harmony of the naked body praised in Antiquity is juxtaposed with its modern exploitation by the pornographic industry, and by consumerist lifestyle. In Antiquity, the ideal body reflected the ideal soul, it actually "embodied" certain spiritual values, such as strength, balance or courage. The contemporary body is more like a machine – it is perfectionist but soulless, and has been commercialised with the intention of making maximum profit. Hollinghurst is critical of the present and expresses his nostalgia for the times prior to gay liberation. Although, in *The Paris Review* interview, he admits that the liberation movement's gains are colossal and irrefutable, and that he much prefers living in the liberal present, he argues that with the advent of the newly emancipated gay culture an element of romance has been removed:

You used to hear older people slightly lamenting the new freedoms, saying it was so much more exciting in the old days when being gay was illegal and one was inducted into a world of signs and hints and codes. The illicit nature was part of the thrill, and that made it feel perhaps more intense (Hollinghurst 2011).

In the book, this attitude is reflected in Will's nostalgia for school times. He "still dreams of that changing room" where there was never any "cloying, adult impurity in the lubricious innocence of what we did" (Hollinghurst 2006, 141). David Alderson (2000, 36) claims that the school's freedom and pleasure are contrasted with Will's moral, legal, commercial freedoms, and notices that "the form which sexual explicitness has predominantly taken in the contemporary situation is presented in Hollinghurst as a violation of those socially integrated, yet eroticised relations of earlier times which

centred on the innocence of their object.” Indeed, Will’s sexual adventures include anonymous sex, regular visits to porn cinemas, and violent, objectifying ways of dealing with his much younger lovers; for example, when he forced his boyfriend Phil to piss himself, and then “pushed him to the floor” into the abundant puddle “and fucked him like a madman” (163). Alderson points to the pornographic, that is the reductively sexual, standardised and fetishistic quality of contemporary desires, and concludes that “its sense of an irrecoverable past and a present whose freedoms are compromised very closely anticipates Hollinghurst’s response to the development of a self-conscious, urban gay scene” (Alderson 2000, 40). Indeed, the 1980s gay male sexuality became increasingly linked to capitalism and consumerist lifestyle. Kaye Mitchell notices how the contemporary aesthete “becomes a collector of sexual experience and, in a more crudely capitalist way, of men” (Mitchell 2006, 45). According to Mitchell, sex is commodified through the practice of cruising, which has also been argued by Tim Edwards: “the homosexual pick-up machine is, in fact, equally accurately seen as a reflection of the internalisation of industrial, capitalist values of efficiency and productivity in turn defined in terms of primarily male sexual activity” (Edwards 1994, 95). *The Swimming-Pool Library* contains a number of bitter and off-putting gay-club episodes, and to an extent Hollinghurst’s attitude can be compared to E. M. Forster’s disenchantment with civilized modernity. In “Terminal Note” to *Maurice*, Forster laments the impossibility of escape from contemporary urban life into a forest, a cave or a “deserted valley for those who wish neither to reform nor corrupt society but to be left alone” (Forster 1987, 254). Hollinghurst’s prose inherits much from Forster, including the recurrent setting of his novels in the idyllic pastoral English countryside. The author’s limited enthusiasm towards modernity and contemporary gay culture is a common theme in his subsequent novels.

Conclusion

The aim of the paper was to demonstrate how “body” functions as a vehicle for multiple meanings in *The Swimming-Pool Library*. First, body is the metaphor for clear-cut division between public and private spheres of the characters’ lives. It also reigns in the latter, a parallel world organised around carnal desires which ignores social conventions and has developed its own set of rules, rituals, standards and values. Hollinghurst himself confirms that in *The Swimming-Pool Library* he addresses the idea that “gay men are linked

across barriers of class and race by sexuality," although the novel is set in a world "in which the forces of class are still extremely powerful" (Driscoll 2009, 142). Secondly, the characters' evolution is reflected and realized corporally: their bodies incur the consequences of their social oppression, as well as their loss of status or power. This concerns not only personal stories but also broader power relations, as bodies have a political meaning. Finally, the changing status and imagery of the body in different epochs corresponds to the changing values and behaviours of the gay community. Historical references (to Antiquity and early 20th century England) as well as the characters' yearning for the bodies they encountered in their youth express nostalgia which is intrinsically linked to queerness.² This serves as a pretext for Hollinghurst to paint a bleak image of contemporary gay culture, where idealisation of the masculine body has shifted from the sphere of aesthetic and romantic fantasy to a matter-of-fact, commodified acquiring of new experiences, as if building a portfolio of sexual partners.

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² This connection is thoroughly investigated by Gilad Padva, who sees nostalgia as means of empowerment and subversion: "Both nostalgia and queerness challenge the hegemonic definition of appropriateness and the demand for causality and linearity, and negate dominant classifications, identifications, hierarchies, and structures of meaning. ... Moreover, nostalgia and queerness, with their vitality, colourfulness, and somewhat unruly and utopian nature, ... are ways of imaginatively fulfilling desired authenticities, particularly for those who find themselves marginalized, out of the straight and narrow" (Padva 2014, 229).

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