

Man's Tongue, Woman's Poison: Deadloch, A Feminist Crime Comedy in the Genre of Police Crime Drama

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Abstract: We argue that *Deadloch* transforms the conventions of the police crime drama into a feminist dark comedy that employs queer humor and "soft" methods of violence to expose and critique patriarchal, colonial, and heteronormative power structures. This study aims to analyze *Deadloch*, a feminist dark comedy, through multiple concepts such as discourse, gender, identity, colonial criticism, and justice. Analysis becomes possible at the intersection of these concepts. In the story set on the island, attempts are made to solve the serial murders and find the killer. In choosing the "island" spatially, its function as a closed microcosm in which social norms and power relations are reproduced is also foregrounded as a metaphor. The victims whose tongues are cut out in the murders are men. In the series where the displacement and redirection of gender identities are realized with humor, the main issue is to overcome binary oppositions such as public/private, female/male, emotion/reason, rational/irrational, love/hate, and pleasure/pain. These binary oppositions are tried to be overcome in a place where emotions are queerized. Emotions blur the fixity of identities, the performativity of masculinities, and the spatial traces of the colonial past in the stories of the series' characters, opening to the past and present. The series uses the cross-genre transitivity and captures this through humor to realize the feminist fantasy of justice. The conflict experienced in the town between the locals and the newcomers also shows the cultural embeddedness of hegemonic masculinity practices. The study asks, first, how humor functions in the aestheticization of crime and violence. Secondly, it asks how narrative structures that disrupt gender stereotypes invite the audience into a new ethico-political space and how social positions such as race, class, culture, and colonial memory intersect in this narrative where crime is coded with femininity. In the study, the method of feminist close reading is used in accordance with the concept of intersectionality, and multiple concepts (gender, identity, class, culture, culture, colonial memory) are analyzed along with the crime comedy under scrutiny. The conflict between conservatives and lesbians begins when two female detectives, Dulcie and Redcliffe, take on the murder. As the murder remains unsolved and the serial killer remains elusive, the polarization and conflict between the locals and the newcomers become more and more apparent, and the issues around sexual identity, class, and hegemonic masculinity become more and more visible.

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Erkeğin Dili, Kadının Zehri: Deadloch, Polisiye Türünde Bir Feminist Suç Komedisi

Öz: Bu çalışma, bir feminist kara komedi olan *Deadloch* dizisini söylem, cinsiyet, kimlik, kolonyalizm eleştirisi, adalet gibi çoklu kavramlarla analiz etmeyi hedeflemektedir. Bu kavramların kesiştiği noktalarda analiz mümkün hale gelebilmektedir. Adada geçen hikâyede, işlenen seri cinayetler çözüme kavuşturulmaya, seri katil bulunmaya çalışılır. Cinayetlerde dilleri kesilerek öldürülen kurbanlar erkeklerdir. Cinsiyet kimliklerinin yer ve yön değiştirmelerinin mizahla gerçekleştiği bu dizide, kamusal/özel, kadın/erkek, duygu/akıl, rasyonel/irasyonel, sevgi/nefret, haz/acı gibi ikilikleri aşmak temel meseledir. Bu ikilikler duyguların queerleştiği yerde aşılmaya çalışılmaktadır. Duygular, dizide karakterlerin geçmişe ve şimdiye açılan hikâyelerinde kimliklerin sabitliğini, erkekliklerin performatifliğini, kolonyal geçmişe ait mekânsal izleri

bulanıklaştırmaktadır. Dizi, mizahla yakaladığı türsel geçişliliği, feminist adalet fantezisini gerçekleştirmek için kullanır. Çalışmada, ilk olarak, mizahın suçun ve şiddetin estetikleştirilmesinde nasıl bir işlev gördüğü sorusu sorulur. İkinci olarak, cinsiyet stereotiplerini bozan anlatı yapılarının izleyiciyi nasıl yeni bir etik-politik alana davet ettiği ve suçun kadınlıkla kodlandığı bu anlatıda, ırk, sınıf, kültür ve kolonyal hafıza gibi toplumsal konumların nasıl kesişmekte oldukları soruları sorulmaktadır. Cinayet çözülemedikçe, seri katil bulunamadıkça yerli halk ve yeni gelenler arasındaki kutuplaşma ve çatışma giderek kendini belli etmeye cinsel kimlik, sınıf ve hegemonik erkeklik kavramları etrafındaki sorunlar daha da görünür olmaya başlar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Feminist Film Noir, Suç Polisiyesi, Şiddet, Mizah, Queer

Jel Kodları: Z1, Z10, Z13

1. Introduction

Deadloch is a television series that premiered on Amazon Prime Video on June 2, 2023, blending the genres of crime, mystery and dark comedy, set in a fictionalized coastal town on the Australian island of Tasmania (IMDb, n.d.). Created by Kate McCartney and Kate McLennan, the series centers on an investigation that begins with a man's body washed up on a beach, not only searching for the perpetrator of a crime, but also constructing a narrative that brings into discussion multilayered issues such as gender, colonial past, cultural domination and sense of justice. The efforts of the detective protagonists Dulcie Collins and Eddie Redcliffe to solve the murder proceed within a feminist framework that subverts classical detective fiction. The series subverts the codes of crime drama by reconstructing humor, gender roles and the figures of the bearer of justice; it stands out as an example of feminist noir with its hybrid aesthetic across genres.

In the series, the story that begins with a man's body washed up on the beach disrupts the normal flow of everyday life in a town where the biggest crime is illegal parking. The "queer" pairing between Eddie Redcliffe, a detective from Darwin, and Dulcie Collins, a detective who has lived in the area for over five years, bears the traces of the genre rupture common in feminist noir narratives. Throughout the murder investigation, Eddie's reactive defense mechanisms and masculine gestures (e.g., her rude language and cowboy demeanor) will transform into a more layered character over time although she begins as a cartoonish figure. Dulcie, on the other hand, is forced to look critically at the town she has lived in for five years and the local community, almost all of whom are her friends; she navigates the boundaries of being a woman in a patriarchal police force, humor and solidarity.

The fact that all four main police characters are played by homosexual actors shows that queer representations in the series are represented not only at the narrative level but also at the acting level. While the characters of Abby Matsuda and Sven Alderman represent police figures outside of normative masculinity, the contradictions between queer identities and masculine power are often conveyed through humor. This suggests that *Deadloch* not only creates a genre break but also constructs a narrative that ironically subverts the gender system (Buckmaster, 2023). The series' representations of crime question the gender regime by reversing the masculine perpetrator-female victim binary. The cutting of the tongues of the murdered men is a direct targeting of the superiority established by masculine domination through symbolic communication. In a narrative where the perpetrator is a woman, the legitimacy, direction and means of violence are once again opened to discussion. In this respect, the series both constructs and questions a feminist fantasy of justice.

The gothic nature of Tasmania is constructed not only as a visual backdrop but also as a spatial metaphor that bends time to represent the tensions of colonial memory, of the past between the indigenous people and the white colonizers, reflected in the present. In *Deadloch*, the real struggles of indigenous people, queer lifestyles, lesbian festivals and

cultural clashes among conservative locals become a politicized representation of town life.

Humor, on the other hand, is operationalized to make these ethical dilemmas visible or to ironically turn them inside out. Obviously, this humor has a breakdown much closer to the definition of dark humor. "The lines separating it from jokes, wit, 'light humor' may be clear. But when is it separated from satire and sarcasm? It is impossible to determine this with precision," says Enis Batur. He virtually tries to define dark humor with a queering dimension that differentiates it from other forms of humor. He compares dark humor to a "bloody crystal" (Batur, 2005, p. 8) which, with its attitude that pokes and even infuriates the established where it is settled, can turn brutal at a moment that is not soft even if it seems calm, measured and elegant.

A multilayered feminist reading of *Deadloch*, which interrogates how crime, violence and humor intersect with gender, seeks to answer several important questions along several axes. First of all, through what discursive, spatial and aesthetic signifiers is the gendered form of crime constructed throughout the series? While violence is an instrument of masculine domination, how does the feminization of the perpetrator transform these representations? Is nonviolence possible, especially within a patriarchal order? Secondly, how does dark humor function in the aestheticization of crime and violence? How does the series subvert criminological representations and the genre codes of detective narrative? How do narrative structures that play with gender stereotypes invite the viewer into a new ethico-political space? Finally, how do social positions such as race, class, culture and colonial memory intersect in this narrative where crime is coded with femininity?

These questions can be addressed within the framework of feminist film theory, queer theory, political functions of humor and intersectional gender approaches. The article will evaluate the representation of crime and violence as a field constructed on the borders of gender categories and discuss the transforming forms of the perpetrator and bearer of justice through the concept of "feminist fantasy of justice". In line with Judith Butler's discourse theory, both the wounding and transformative power of language, and Slavoj Žižek's relations with the symbolic forms of violence and humor will be analyzed. Furthermore, by tracing the "queering" of emotions and narrative structures in which binaries are dissolved, this article will examine how affective regimes are transformed in *Deadloch*'s imaginary justice. All these theoretical lines will be evaluated together with the visibility of indigenous people, the mobility of colonial memory and the reproduction of cultural power structures. In *Deadloch*, justice is reconstructed not only as a legal norm but also as a matter of affective and social imagination. Not only who is the perpetrator, but also by whom, how and through what means justice is established is within the scope of this study.

2. Theoretical Framework

The crime, violence and humor elements of the *Deadloch* series theoretically open up space to be addressed within the framework of feminist media theory, queer theory, discourse theory and colonial criticism. By pushing the boundaries of the police procedural narrative in terms of genre, it reveals multi-layered issues such as gender, normative violence, regimes of representation and postcolonial belonging. Genre conventions reimaged through a feminist and queer lens demonstrate how both discourse and practice shape gendered identities and simultaneously challenge them. Analyzing humor from a historical perspective demands a multi-conceptual approach to its representation, a complexity that an open-ended narrative embraces, thereby diversifying the theoretical trajectory of the analysis.

When the analysis is initiated from one point of this multilayered elemental composition of the series, we can look at the most intense, densely textured stratification from a few key perspectives. First, the feminization of the perpetrator and the reconstruction of crime within the feminist fantasy of justice. The female detectives at the

center of *Deadloch* and the various female subjectivities on the island not only invert traditional roles in crime dramas but also reconstruct the relationship of justice to perpetrator and victim on the ground of a feminist fantasy. For a long time, the detectives thought that the culprit was a woman because they found traces of poison, drugs, etc. during the murders. While Dulcie is almost certain that the culprit is a woman, Redcliffe, who does not hesitate to look at the colonial roots, argues that times and means have changed and that “soft methods” do not reveal the perpetrator of the crime as they used to. Dulcie Collins says: “Poisoning is purview of female killers. I think it's really unwise to dump our profile and pursue a man” (Prime, 2023). Eddie Redcliffe's response to this is as follows: “Men did not use moisturizer or know their kids' names when that profile was written. You need to update your thinking. It's like Sven always says, ‘Everyone deserves to be liberated from the gender binary.’” (Prime, 2023). These discursive dynamics find spatial expression in the island, which operates as a postcolonial microcosm where power relations are simultaneously reproduced and contested.

In *Deadloch*, Dulcie Collins' assumption that the perpetrator is a woman, based on the fact that the murders are committed with indirect and invisible methods such as “poison”, is a reproduction of the historical and gendered relationship between crime and softness. Even Dulcie's name itself, with its Latin origin (*dulcis*), embodies this feminine coding by evoking softness and delicacy. However, in this scene, the “soft” forms of the crime are not only directed against a female figure; the appearance of the male perpetrator necessitates a rethinking of softness not only as a state of passivity attributed to women but as a supra-gendered power. In this context, Eddie Redcliffe's “Everyone deserves to be liberated from the gender binary” is a call for a radical transformation not only of the gender of the perpetrator but also of ways of thinking and perceptual norms. This resonates strongly with the text that softness is “deceptive in its apparent simplicity” and carries “an active passivity that can become an extraordinary force of symbolic resistance”. As Anne Dufourmantelle describes in *Puissance de la douceur* (2013, 2023), softness is not a passive surrender but an ethical and political force that makes it possible for existence to come into contact with risk and vulnerability: “Softness withdraws itself, but this withdrawal is not an abandonment but an openness that enables transformation.” In this sense, softness becomes a mode of action by positioning itself outside the conventional patterns of violence, just as in the “soft” methods adopted by the male perpetrator in the series. Softness is worrisome because, in Dufourmantelle's words, it “shows us our own weakness,” and it is meant to be suppressed or ignored. Yet, both in the series and the philosophical text, softness with its eternal uniqueness appears as a power that sits at the center of both ethics and politics. In this context, *Deadloch* becomes a political text that allows softness to be reconsidered in terms of power, gender and resistance (Dufourmantelle, 2023, pp. 21-22). The island's postcolonial contours set the stage for *Deadloch* to enact a feminist fantasy of justice through ‘soft’ violence and radical inversion. The violent staging of male bodies in *Deadloch* shakes up the female victim-centered visual order of the classical crime narrative and develops a new interpretation of the gendered nature of crime. In the opening beach scene of the series, the male victim is found with his tongue cut out, signaling both a symbolic loss of discourse and a reversal of the familiar relationship of the masculine body to the camera. This theme sets the stage for a more comprehensive analysis of the aestheticization of violence and the crisis of representation of masculinity in the following episodes. Thus, the performativity of inversion and the role of queer humor in creating new ethico-political spaces are revealed.

From a feminist imagination of justice, the female perpetrator's killing of men in the name of justice is not a form of revenge against male violence, but a speculative questioning of how justice works on behalf of whom. In this context, the “feminist fantasy of justice” keeps the tension between women's subjectivity and ethical boundaries constantly heated (Halberstam, 2011). The second is the performativity of reconstruction and inversion. Judith Butler's theory of discourse and performativity is the umbrella theory that still makes it vividly possible to understand gender constructions in *Deadloch*.

Simply put, for example, the vulgar, gendered and extremist expressions in Eddie Redcliffe's use of language imitate patriarchal language (representations of dominant masculine practices of heavy drinking and foul language) and become at the same time an intervention that disrupts it. Similarly, Dulcie's position in the masculine police hierarchy provides an example of how femininity is constructed through discourse. Discourse appears here as both a repressive and wounding tool and a site of resistance (Butler, 2021). As the criminal successfully conceals himself, the pressure on female detectives from the masculine superiors begins to increase. As the body count increases and the perpetrator goes uncaptured, the discursive struggle reaches a higher level. Women detectives are accused of being useless, of not being able to do a job. Here, the threat of retrieving the weapons in the women's hands, which are instruments of both violence and justice, is also now in the open. Dulcie's superior, Shane Hastings says, "I'll pull you both off duty and send some men" (Prime, 2023). Instead of the woman, the man will find the culprit, and justice and peace on the island will be restored. The Commissioner also tells Dulcie that she is hysterical, that she is ruled by the moon, and that he is taking action to dismiss the two female commissioners from the case (Press, 2023). Here, hysteria is "the person who resists psychic life, the dominant ideology. In this context, the hysterical person is the one who resists, struggles against the language of the sovereign, disrupts it and produces their own language" (Baki, 2012). Dulcie and Redcliffe as "hysterical women" try to produce their own subjective fields of resistance by using the language of humor.

This threat is directly related to Kristeva's definition of the hysterical woman as a figure who "exposes the contradictions of order by carrying them in her body". Dulcie's being accused of being "hysterical"—being under the influence of the moon, behaving irrationally, being stigmatized with instability—is a product of the dualistic view of the patriarchal order towards women, just as Kristeva states in *The Powers of Horror* (trans., 2004): a woman is simultaneously desired and excluded, given tasks and condemned to failure. As Baki (2012) puts it, hysteria is not only a pathology; it is an agent that resists the dominant ideology on the psychic grounds, disrupts its language, and produces its own subjective narrative. In *Deadloch*, the language that Dulcie and Redcliffe construct through humor against the masculine structure of justice is an example of this hysterical resistance: They mock the logical integrity of the masculine order through uncontrollability, outrage and grotesque elements. Kristeva's parallel reading of the "strangeness" directed at intelligent, intellectual women with the analysis of hysteria can also be found in the female detectives' relationship with the rational in the series. The detectives are destined to prove the absurdity of reason (the masculine element) when this reason, on top of that, resides in a feminine body (Kristeva, 2004, p. 233). Therefore, these figures are not only repressed women; they are symbolic actors of resistance who expose the inconsistency of the order itself.

Humor, here, is not only a means of providing relief through its laugh-out-loud quality but also a means of criticism against the structural dilemmas of the symbolic order. The disruption of the normative is also very much related to the dissolution and transformation of dualities. The tense yet complementary relationship between the characters Eddie and Dulcie can be read in terms of queer theories of affect. The scenes in which emotions erode normative binary systems (male/female, tough/emotional, professional/personal) reveal the fluidity of gender and the instability of norms, contrary to what is known, in the context of queer theory. Eddie's exaggerated gestures and overreactions are reflected as a form of emotional queering (Ahmed, 2014).

Barry Sanders argues that to understand the history of laughter, one has to learn to interpret by utilizing a kind of reversal and indirection, and even to make the effort not only to read between the lines but also to reach the meaning somewhere behind the lines. Furthering his analysis, he asks: If laughter really works—if inversion really works—shouldn't those who have lived at the bottom of the heap for centuries, or those who have stood on the side of the heap, eventually come closer to the top, closer to the center? And

shouldn't we also hear their voices now? With no doubt, this is an ancient debate, but the path it takes is familiar. It is based on male supremacy, on the social prejudice against humor by women or those who have lived under the heap. However, the destination of this path is unique. Sanders points out that the feminist movement recognized the power of laughter to enact change far more than the anti-war movement (Sanders, 2001, pp. 310-311). For Sanders, this power is a creative and subversive form of resistance against dominant narratives. The violent comedy of the eighteenth century's female writers served as a powerful vehicle for feminist protest. Dark humor asserts a witty control over the paradoxes and absurdities of life. Jane Collier's "Essay on the Art of Ingeniously Tormenting" (1753), for example, is a satire on power relations, encouraging readers to "do to everyone the last thing you would wish done to you". This essay is for women who do not have the "power to use brute force." In addition, by acknowledging the omnipresence of unjust gender and class hierarchies, the essay reclaims the little power given to women in society (Bilger, 1995, p. 324). Dark humor allows women, queers and LGBTQ+ individuals to reveal unspoken crime and violence in their lives through humor and laughter. While the emotions that emerge with humor point to the side of the crime, violence is expressed. Emotions are queerized and power is gathered from authority. In *Deadloch*, especially the humor of queer characters and female detectives appears as a tool that transforms and turns upside down the imagination of justice as well as the disclosure of the dominant narrative.

The third perspective is instructive for understanding the aesthetics of dark humor. The break Žižek captures in the relationality of symbolic violence and humor is that humor makes the violence of the ideological order temporarily visible (Žižek, 2008). These breaks and twists are also aesthetically appealing. *Deadloch* interrogates normative order by staging the clash between Tasmania's Gothic atmosphere and dark humor on both visual and political levels; low-contrast lighting and shadow-laden spatial design intensifies the narrative tension. To enrich its Gothic ambience, the series draws on fog-shrouded cliffs, churning coastlines, and desolate country cottages. In its spatial composition and character conflicts, the vestiges of Tasmania's colonial past are distinctly evident. By foregrounding Indigenous characters and confronting the remnants of colonial structures, *Deadloch* transforms its setting into a dramatic stage of colonial memory.

The town ruled by women and queer figures functions as an allegorical space where patriarchy is twinned and colonial hierarchies are inverted (Smith, 1999). In a way, the basic paradigm that Selma James adopts while addressing race, gender and class together is that these three structures are inseparable and mutually shaped rather than being intersectional. James considers these relations as intertwined and co-existing structures (James, 2010). The town of *Deadloch* is a place inhabited by blue-collar workers, performance artists, and lesbians bringing gourmet delicacies. This place is articulated in a much older land dispute between the indigenous inhabitants of the region and the white families who colonized this island off the southern coast of Australia (Press, 2023). Class, gender and race, which are in-between, intersecting and articulating, make this place a scene of conflict and connection. For example, the character of Margaret Carruthers in the series stands out as a complex figure representing the colonial past and the current social structure of the town. Although at first glance she appears to be a female leader who supports women's entrepreneurship and agency and who contributes to the public sphere, in the subtext she displays a manipulative, racist and self-serving personality. With this character, the thematic depth of the series emerges and viewers are offered a perspective that will make them think about the themes of colonialism, racism and social justice in tandem (Nanda, 2023).

3. Methodology

This study examines critical visual textual analysis through sociological analysis, which basically looks at the categories of culture, gender, crime, society and power

(Berger, 1991, p. 74). In addition, feminist close-reading was used in this study which needs an intersectional reading in order to analyze the aspect of film noir related to humor and crime. Although feminist close-reading is a key method of analysis in literary studies, as a method of feminist knowledge production it also enables cultural readings in different disciplines. This method focuses on the concept of intersectionality. Feminist close-reading allows for a reading that puts concepts such as language, images, references and intertextuality at the center of the research. Nash (2019) recommends feminist close reading to access the “real” meanings of intersectionality (p. 61). Similarly, Kier-Byfield (2024) argues that feminist close reading offers a critical tool to unpack narrative structures in which social identities and privileges are entangled (p. 179). In *Deadloch*, the elements that constitute the subject such as language, humor, identity and gender necessitate an intersectional analysis. For all this spectrum to emerge following a holistic, fundamental line, it is necessary to hold on to a basic concept that will not distract the analysis. One concept is undoubtedly intersectionality. In the series, the dualities of power-weakness, subject-structure, interior-exterior, sea-land, order-disorder, violence-nonviolence, male-female, nature-mind, pleasure-pain, island-city, white-black will be explained through the concept of intersectionality.

Feminist close-reading is one of the first methodological approaches in feminist literary studies that emphasizes the contextualization and historicism used in cultural studies. It is very important to define the framework of this method which emphasizes the necessity to take factors such as class, ethnicity and religiosity into account, interacting with gender. 'Feminist close-reading' as a feminist methodology provides a rich perspective on the differences that define the paradigm of postmodern construction such as rights, ethics, women, subjectivity, and a methodological ground to explain these differences (Lukić & Espinosa, 2011, pp. 107-110). Intersectionality, the core concept of the method, develops a reflection on understanding how power and privilege are experienced, expressed and questioned through differences emerging in life. Thinking feminism in the context of intersectionality makes visible how privilege and power interact with bodies and voices in complex and intersecting ways (Kier-Byfield, 2024, p. 185). The method analyzes how gender-related power imbalances as well as other intersecting identities such as race, class and sexuality are embedded in texts. By looking closely at the language, images and narrative structures used in the texts, it clarifies the picture of how these elements contribute to the construction of gender and power.

4. Genre Transitions in *Deadloch* and Feminist Film Noir

In 1930s' Hollywood, female detectives were portrayed as women who put their careers ahead of traditional female pursuits such as marriage and family, working in police departments or newspapers during a period of economic depression. These women were as active and independent as their male counterparts in Hollywood at the time (Phillippa Gates, 2009, p. 25). In the 1940s, female detectives were seen as a potential threat to masculinity, just like a criminal, in a world of crime investigation dominated by men. Kathleen Gregory Klein states, “Like criminals, she is a community member who does not conform to the status quo. Her presence shifts the binary oppositions of male/female, public/private, reason/emotion... away from the center.” With the mystery solved, the female detective reaches the end of the protagonist's journey with a marriage proposal from her rival. Furthermore, the personal lives, relationships, and emotional struggles of female detectives are intertwined with the dark atmosphere of film noir (Gates, 2009, p. 25). This noir atmosphere confines the private lives of female detectives to an ominous mood and an unproductive psychological space.

The female detective, who was a secret agent and reporter in Hollywood stories in the 1930s, took on a mission in film noir in the 1940s, where her sole purpose in solving the mystery was to save the man she loved rather than being an independent woman. During these years, she was a wife who fulfilled her duties and a female detective who tried to save the man she loved by solving the mystery. After the 1950s white female

detectives were absent from detective stories in films until the 1980s with a few exceptions but in the early 1970s, they found their place as a group of black female detectives in Blaxploitation films targeting the black audience. By the 1980s female detective stories regained popularity. The most famous examples of popular female detective characters include Cagney & Lacey, the tough detective Jessica Fletcher and the FBI agent Clarice Starling. Female detectives maintained their popularity in the 1990s and 2000s, appearing in roles investigating crime scenes and specializing in behavioral science or forensics (Gates, 2011, p. 9).

During the years in question, particularly in the 1980s, fragilities in the normative gender order began to emerge on a certain level amid ongoing debates. A serious discussion took place around the female detective drama Cagney & Lacey, which had been canceled twice and then re-released with strong fan support, focusing on issues of sex, gender, and female detectives. However, despite winning numerous Emmy Awards and receiving critical acclaim, Cagney & Lacey failed to spark a similar trend of police dramas centered on female bonding (Mizejewski, 2004, p. 71).

Film noir refers to a male fantasy defined by female sexuality. The characters and themes of the detective genre seem ideal for film noir. It is a genre that can easily express moral and physical chaos, greed, passion, crime, and thriller. The visual style that shaped film noir in the US in the '40s and '50s includes the dramatic mood of darkness, dimly lit night scenes, shadows as a psychological element, and claustrophobic compositions that oppress the characters both indoors and outdoors. Melodramatic and noir elements are even found in the Western and musical genres. When the theme of the genre does not align with noir, an interesting and complex blend emerges (Place, 2012, p. 50). For example, classic American film noir as a genre and style has infiltrated television and popular culture. Noir has virtually begun to hybridize with other genres and styles. The most notable examples include comedy, science fiction, Western, and Gothic. Following the development of noir, the 1990s and 2000s saw an increase in the visibility of female detectives, particularly in the detective genre, with a growing presence of lesbian culture (Gates, 2011, p. 13). This visibility has granted women a newfound freedom to express their sexual identities within the police procedural genre. Moore states, "By definition, lesbian mysteries subvert the paradigm, placing sexually suspicious women in the role of investigators, freeing them from the clichés of victim or criminal, and allowing them to question a society that has long oppressed them" (Gates, 2011, p. 263). The heroine having uncovered the mystery is now far from marrying her male lover. The stories feature feminist dark comedy elements alongside noir themes, engage with genres from other countries, and include a queer lead detective. For example the genre comedy-noir, influenced by scandi-noir, has begun to find its place within Australian noir. *Deadloch* is also influenced by Scandinavian (Nordic) noir and makes references to the Nordic genre from the beginning to the end of the crime series. *Deadloch* also uses the spatial environment of Tasmania to visually reference Scandinavian (and Tassie) noir. In the opening, it achieves this by encoding it in a noir-mystery style without highlighting its humorous tone. It also subverts the cliché of the naked, violated female corpse in crime dramas, creating an entertaining crime comedy using noir themes (Brammer, 2025, pp. 4-5).

5. Queerification of Emotions and Humor as Counter-Discourse

According to Winston, the distinctive feature of dark humor is the incongruity between content and form (1995, p. 323). Laughter can represent an important victory over adversity. Gloria Kaufman sees humor as a potential means of survival and a reaction to maintain mental health under pressure. Similarly, Freud argues that humor provides psychological relief to people in dire situations (as cited in Bilger, 1995, p. 324). Especially in situations where repressed impulses cannot be expressed directly, jokes and humor serve to release internal tension by creating an indirect means of expression. As Freud (2003) noted, even being a listener of humor requires a certain psychological compromise,

meaning that the individual must possess both the processes of repression and the internal tendencies to overcome them. In this process, laughter functions as a kind of *in statu nascendi* discharge, that is, the release of repressed energy at the moment of birth. Especially threatening, repressive, or socially risky content is both expressed and creates mental release and relaxation in the individual through humor. Thus, humor is not merely a form of communication but also a means of purging psychological burdens, distracting attention and discharging repressed energy in a “harmless” manner (Freud, 2003, pp. 182–184).

In this context, social humor and political satire allow suppressed thoughts to be expressed not only at the individual level but also at the collective level. In situations where confronting authority directly is risky, dangerous, or impossible, criticism expressed through humor allows suppressed intellectual or emotional content to be revealed in a form that is considered “harmless.” This indirect relief associated with humor by Freud creates a “shared laughter” at the social level, bringing together individuals who share a certain psychological agreement. This shared experience enables both the expression of repressed social reality and the establishment of a temporary space of solidarity. Thus, political humor is not merely a form of criticism but also a tool of resistance and resilience for oppressed groups; the laughter that occurs in the *in statu nascendi* moment represents the discharge/release of this resistance both on a psychological and social level.

In *Deadloch*, female detectives' jokes are often more than just a means of relief in the face of particularly tense and violent events. These jokes also serve as a way to share repressed anger or sexual/political tension through coded language. They establish a psychological space of agreement with the viewer (the third person): The audience shares the characters' tension through humor and becomes a part of this suppressed content. In Freud's theory, the presence of a third person during the sharing of a joke is critically important in terms of the joke's being “approved” or “rejected.” When shared with a third person, humor allows not only the individual but also the community (the audience) to experience relief from repressed content. In *Deadloch*, the trilateral circulation of humor corresponds not only to the humorous skeleton defined by Freud but also to a ritual that enables the social acceptance of repressed reality. In this sense, both the characters and the audience collectively bear and release the burden contained within the joke (187).

Laughing at the humorist can be read as a tactic to appease the eternal conflict between knowledge and belief, much like visual pleasure: it reminds us of the complex relationship between the knowledge of difference/deficiency and the belief in abundance/omnipotence. Freud (2003) emphasizes that the repressive practices of civilization have a difficult aspect for the human psyche to compensate for, and that jokes serve as a means of reclaiming and coping with this. Jokes come into play as a way of reclaiming what has been given regarding civilization. Margaret Atwood famously remarked, “Men are afraid that women will laugh at them. Women are afraid that men will kill them” (Hennefeld, 2022, pp. 250-252). The Netflix special *Nanette* (2018) by Tasmanian lesbian stand-up comedian Hannah Gadsby sparked an intense debate about comedy and laughter concerning feminist politics. This difference becomes evident in Gadsby's detailed account of the traumas of homophobic oppression and sexual violence. The show invites the audience to laugh in the face of Gadsby's pain and humiliation. It rejects not Gadsby's laughter, but that of the audience. This is also a paradigm shift within feminist political comedy. It marks the emergence of a boundary-pushing comedy approach intertwined with negative criticism (Hennefeld, 2022, p. 279).

Humor is one of the fundamental categories in *Deadloch* crime fiction. The feminist justice fantasy emerges from a humorous perspective, attempting to transcend binary oppositions. Binaries such as male/female, private/public, oppressor/oppressed, emotion/reason, guilty/innocent, island/city, and individual/community are both softened and can be bent by humor. For example, family exists as a complex unit with numerous intertwined layers. These layers include power, resistance, emotions and

money (Connell, 1987, p. 121). In *Deadloch*, family stands in a place where the normative order is not challenged. Lesbian families raise children. The family relationship (husband-wife) in Dulcie's lesbian relationship, the lesbian restaurant chef's wife trying to get pregnant and the fact that she has a son from a previous marriage show that a family-opposed contrast is not established on the island. Humor erodes the heterosexual family stereotype without undermining the institution of the family. The genre's rigid patterns also begin to erode through humor. For example in film noir the family is an expression of disappointment and unfulfilled desire. One of the defining parameters of film noir is the absence of normal family relationships (the network of relationships between mother-father-wife-husband-daughter-son) (Harvey, 2012, p. 36). In *Deadloch*, the blending of feminist film noir and humor forms carries the founding elements of the family into a political and ethical terrain through emotions, creating a family discourse that does not render the characters extraordinary. As such, humor is not merely a genre element in the narrative structure of the *Deadloch* series, but also a carrier of feminist justice fantasy and a disruptive political gesture. When viewed through Lacan's theoretical framework, comedy is an "intersection" where the biological and the symbolic, the cultural and the bodily collide. According to Lacan, comedy, as a type of copula, attempts to unite two separate ontological planes—nature/culture, law/desire—while also revealing the impossibility of this union. In other words, the image of composition is deceptive; the impossible but inevitable connection established between two realities both establishes the relationship and reveals its inconsistency, loss, or emptiness. In *Deadloch*, this intersection is staged through both the symbolic norms of the family institution (spouse, mother, child) and the desire-driven forms that transcend them (lesbianism, reconstituted relationships, single parenthood). In this context, the humor in the series does not merely entertain; it also touches on the missing link between law and desire, representation and disruption (Zupančič, 2011, pp. 204-206). The authoritarian, heteronormative weight of the phallus is comically displaced. Here, the phallus is no longer the law; it is the subject of humor, an exaggerated figure, a caricature that has lost its meaning in the queer universe of *Deadloch*.

6. In Tasmania, The Rescue Operation of *Deadloch* from Lesbians!

An island, being a piece of land surrounded by water, is often associated with the meanings of confinement and isolation. However, an island also carries within it the idea of encounter and openness (Çalıcı, 2019, p. 270). From the perspective of the characters in the series, the island represents a new starting point, a time-space image where mistakes are erased and courageous decisions are made. With the appearance of corpses the city's memory is revived. There is now an inevitable transition and interaction between the city and the island. The image of the island also carries a connotation of the female body and exoticism. The island, a distant, exotic, unexplored fantasy space, is the central space of dreams (Berger, 1972). In the criminal universe of *Deadloch*, the small, quiet and peaceful environment of the island welcomes visitors and settlers who have different identities with stories of city in their past and who rely on the island's capacity for rehabilitation. Modern-day lifestyles such as yoga, gourmet cuisine, festivals, healers and spiritualists also represent the island's dynamic nature, embodying both its traditional and contemporary faces.

Aleyna Rahme, the female mayor of the island, and Dulcie Collins, Sven Alderman, and Abby Matsuda, lesbian, gay and heterosexual police officers, have no trouble maintaining order on an island where crime is non-existent. In the police drama, it was major crimes that brought the chaos of the city to the island. The tranquility of the island is completely shattered when the bodies of men with their tongues cut out begin washing up on shore. The traces left behind by the new police detectives of *Deadloch* in the big cities also begin to surface on the island. As personal histories cast a shadow over the bodies, deciphering the connection(s) between the mutilated corpses becomes increasingly

difficult. After all, a body is the trace left behind by a crime and the record of a crime is engraved into the memory of the collective body.

Shane Hastings, the Tasmanian police commissioner, does not take the lesbian community on the island 'seriously'. Lesbianism is a parameter that has been rendered invisible in the heteronormative order. Rather, these close relationships are perceived as a sexual display aimed at heterosexual men (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014, p. 6). As the serial killer remains at large, Shane Hastings prepares to take center stage with all his masculine bravado, ready to expel the lesbians from *Deadloch*. Upon learning from Senior Constable Dulcie about the first body washed ashore (the victim whom Dulcie mistakenly refers to as "he"), Hastings asks Dulcie whether the victim had been sexually assaulted. Dulcie says the victim is male and the chief responds, "In cases like this, you assume it's a woman." The fact that the victim is male subverts both film noir's portrayal of murder's mystery through the female body and Nordic noir's mysterious female victim binary. This time, it is the male body that would be objectified and remain in the camera's lens for a long while. The victim is male and as men begin to be killed, the crime changes sides. What follows is a predictable race. As the bodies pile up, the men's fantasy of reclaiming *Deadloch* is set in motion.

Police procedural and crime drama are among the most "masculine" television genres (Feasey, 2008, p. 80). The success of male police officers in the public sphere requires sacrifice in their private lives as they are seen to neglect their personal lives for the greater good (Feasey, 2008, p. 84). Hastings, who is fully committed to finding the serial killer, has lost his trust in women and has taken action to take over the case from the women. Hastings gathered the men of the town to save the men of the island from lesbians, saying that men should take over the tasks related to protection, security and crime in town. Hastings and his team's first suspect was the so-called lesbian chef (Skye O'Dwyer) who supposedly hated men. The police chief gathered all the male police officers to arrest Skye O'Dwyer, putting on a display of masculinity and power. The male police officers who took over the case from Dulcie and Eddie arrested Skye O'Dwyer and all the women around her without questioning. Women with weapons and institutional power lost their weapons again. This situation signifies once again the loss of power, the monopoly of violence and authority. That's because the state already arms men and disarms women. When you look at the diplomatic, colonial, and military policies of big countries, you see that they're shaped by masculine ideologies that value toughness and power (Connell, 1987, p. 126). Police aggression reinforces authoritarian masculinity and coercive apparatuses of state define the relationships between masculinities (Connell, 1987, p. 129).

Dulcie and Redcliffe continue to search for the killer even though they should withdraw from the case. The imprisoned women escape from jail after remembering Alanis Morissette's song "You Oughta Know" (1995), which is an important clue to catching the killer. They set off for the farm in the woods to find the killer as well as to help Dulcie and Redcliffe. Even though their weapons are taken away, they still have a collective solidarity network that they created and that allows them to act together, becoming particularly apparent at the end of the series. Hastings gathers all the men in the town, puts them on a bus (the killer is also on the bus!) and sends them to a place he believes is safe, but it is once again the women who save the men of the town and their "tongues" from the killer. The female audience was not deprived of the pleasure of a scene where women save men unlike conventional police procedurals, where men solve all the mysteries.

7. *Deadloch* Football Team: From Normative Masculinity to Fragile Solidarity

Although the island is governed by women, the normative gender order on the island continues to be seen from a perspective that points to the universal, i.e., male gender. The fundamental parameter that can be traced in the works of Kimmel & Aronson (2003) is that gender is not merely a biological characteristic but also a structure shaped in social

and cultural contexts. This understanding reveals that gender is not a fixed and universal category, but rather varies according to historical, cultural, and social circumstances (Kimmel & Aronson, 2003, p. 503). Therefore, gender roles and identities are determined by the values, norms and institutions of the society in which they exist and are constantly being reconstructed.

Emotional disconnect, competition, homophobia and objectification of women in men's relationships with other men perpetuate and maintain patriarchy (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014, p. 6). On the island, the *Deadloch* football team is a space where men maintain and reproduce their gender strategies. Older men in the town try to teach young boys how to play football as well as male rituals in the club. Tammy Hampson, a young female player who wants to join the youth team, is an Aboriginal woman, a face of the colonial past. Tammy, who is not accepted into the team, tries to join the team and to prove to her male peers how good a player she is, but she is not accepted because of her gender. Football is one of the signs of a masculine identity. Qualities considered as signs of a masculine identity can vary depending on age, ethnicity, race, class, historical and cultural characteristics (Schrock Schwalbe, 2009, p. 280). Men must form a collaborative group, such as a football club, to enable, maintain and demand membership in a dominant gender group (Schrock Schwalbe, 2009, p. 281).

What is natural and what constitutes natural differences are determined by cultural structures (Connell, 1987, p. 76). These seemingly natural structures feed dualities. The symbolic value of masculinity feeds on opposites and polarities. For example when contrasts such as skilled/unskilled, heavy/light, dangerous/less dangerous, dirty/clean, interesting/boring, dynamic/static are identified, the representation of masculinity through these contrasts also points to a continuity in the police procedural genre (Haywood & Mac an Ghaill, 2003, p. 22). In the series, the binary of strong/weak associates men with football, suggesting that sport helps to reinforce male identity. Sporting achievements fueled by contrasts enable a masculine creation that rewards masculine skills (MacKinnon, 2003, p. 10). At the same time, sport is an ideal tool for men to reject values they consider feminine, develop masculine qualities and display them (Kimmel & Messner, 1992, p. 536). Football, as a club in *Deadloch*, is an important masculine space where men distinguish themselves from homosexuals and dominant masculine practices revolve around aggression, competition, rivalry, and hierarchy. Tammy, who is not allowed to join the team, and Mike Nugent, one of the football coaches who is a transvestite enjoying cross-dressing, have found common ground in football, an important arena for the presentation of masculine identity. Tammy is fragile because she was not accepted into the team while Mike is equally vulnerable due to years of being mocked in this harsh male environment. In a scene where Tammy is being manhandled by her male peers, Mike comes to her rescue. Following the path opened by queer theory, which views gender transition as a breakdown or at least a sign of fragility in the gender order (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 851), emotions can neither be reduced to purely individual feelings nor treated as universal and fixed responses. Accordingly, approaching emotions as biological realities makes it difficult to understand what an emotion really is and can even lead to misunderstanding (Smith, 2023, p. 15). For this reason, emotions should not be treated as unchanging or universal responses for everyone, but as experiences that are shaped by societal relationships and subject to change depending on context.

As an example, the football club in *Deadloch* functions as a symbolic stage for patriarchal masculinity while transforming into a new space due to the unfixability of emotions on this stage. Tammy's exclusion from the team because of her gender or Mike's years of exclusion are not merely individual disappointments; they are the result of normative masculinity, a regime of oppression that operates through emotions. On the scene where Tammy is being bullied, Mike's appearance and the solidarity that forms between the two is an emotional momentum that queers emotions, i.e., overturns gender norms. In this scene, emotions such as anger, sadness, and compassion/care deviate from

their traditionally gendered contexts: anger is no longer directed at aggressive masculinity but at the demand for equality; compassion/care is no longer associated with femininity but with shared trauma and resistance.

In *Deadloch*, the football field is a space where masculinity is reproduced on both physical and symbolic levels. However, this space also transforms into a stage of resistance that aligns with the pain accepted by sports culture and takes it to a more advanced level (Le Breton, 2015, pp. 193-194). For male players, presence on the field is a source of power, pleasure, and control; for Tammy and Mike, on the other hand, this space is the battlefield where they confront exclusion, belittlement, and vulnerability—a different kind of competition. This struggle shaped by Mike's years of being mocked and Tammy's pain of not being accepted into the team and being unable to achieve the "temporary excitement" and sense of belonging on the field also leaves them facing an overwhelming transgression. Even if they are not included in this excitement, they develop a form of solidarity and subjectivity through pain outside that space. Pain here is not a force that is suppressed but rather one that transforms, the one at the limits of social acceptance, recognizing and legitimizing their existence.

8. Language, Violence and Symbolic Display: The Dissolution of Hegemonic Masculinity in *Deadloch*

Žižek (2008) states that ideology is a set of discourses that present a social order as natural. Within this set of discourses, the language of men signifies the normative, while women are placed in an emotional and irrational language. Speaking from within gender norms occurs within these language systems. At the beginning of the series, a male corpse and a severed tongue refer to a struggle over symbolic meanings through discourse. The language of men has been symbolically displaced. Butler (2021, p. 35) interprets this as a way of changing the direction of aggression through nonviolence. The metaphor of the severed tongue also signifies both violence and non-violence. In the series, there is a tongue that has been cut out by a serial killer. On the other hand, there is a metaphorical displacement of the language of the gendered male who represents and disseminates universal reason and knowledge. The speakers are now predominantly female. The male's tongue has been cut out, creating a shift in direction. The speaking and calling subject is now of a different gender in the town's linguistic universe and is no longer male (Feasey, 2008, p. 80). *Deadloch* is like a disguised version of this masculine display space.

In serial killer narratives, disorder is sought to be brought under control. Patterns underlying the crimes are expected to be discovered. Murders are constructed as an artistic game (Allué, 2002, p. 11). In *Deadloch*, the mutilation of men's tongues and the transfer of discursive authority to women is a dramatic example of the transformation defined within the framework of art, terror and the desire to transgress boundaries. This perspective, which sees the disturbing proximity of literary creativity and violence as the legacy of romantic excess, essentially confronts us with the aesthetics of excess (Lentricchia & McAuliffe, 2004, p. 14). A radical intervention developed against the normative order is at the center of art or narrative. The staging of murders as an artistic game show how the destructive desire in the romantic tradition is re-embodied in contemporary popular culture. Thus, the series brings together the artistic and political layers of rebellion by violating not only aesthetic boundaries but also social and gender-based discursive structures. For example one of the layers of the aestheticization of violence is poison when it comes to women. Dulcie suspected for a long time, based on the killer's use of poison, that the killer was a woman. She interrogated the women in the town and searched for a clue. While the notion that poisoning is "specific to women" may seem to reproduce a stereotype, the act of poisoning represents the empowerment of women within the domestic sphere, where they have traditionally been confined, and the transformation of this space into a threat for men (Aykut, 2010, p. 60). Poison is a powerful element that reflects symbolism in the series. When detectives find a clue related to poison, the first thing that comes to mind is the possibility that the perpetrator is a woman.

Aykut states, "Crime is socially constructed beyond its reality; it cannot be considered separately from parameters such as gender, class and race as a discourse. Furthermore, it demonstrates how conventional images of femininity and masculinity are reproduced through this discourse" (Aykut, 2010, p. 60). As speculation spread that the killer was a chef following Abby's tests, Skye O'Dwyer, who had a troubled relationship with her father, was also implicated due to her lesbian identity and the lesbian chef became the first suspect. Skye O'Dwyer, the chef who was arrested "on the grounds that she hated men," drew attention due to the restaurant she owned, her profession as a chef and her skillful use of knives, which were the tools of the crime. However, this time she is not in a domestic setting but as a female chef who has transformed the restaurant she owns into her own space. The binary opposition of woman and poison has shifted direction in line with Butler's ethical political grounding, through non-violence. The domestic kitchen has been transformed into the stylish kitchen of a lesbian who has taken control of power.

In police dramas, forensics and forensic experts medicalize the scene of death in order to aesthetically display violence. In *Deadloch*, the crime scene is controlled by forensic scientist James King and the information requested by the police is obtained from James's crime scene investigation results. James also does not take female detectives seriously and communicates with Police Chief Hastings about case-related information. The detectives' reliance on a female forensic expert stems from James's belief that female detectives cannot solve these murders, reflecting his normative gender binary that places women in a subordinate position. The bodies are those of men who were washed ashore, crucified and found on the beach. In addition to James, who is analyzing the bodies and clues at the crime scene, there is Abby, James' girlfriend, who was a forensic science student before starting a relationship with James. She decides to become a regular police officer because she cannot risk James' job being compromised. James tells Abby that she is not very successful and that she will never be able to handle that job. Abby constantly tries to convince James that she will leave him, but she cannot make him believe that she is serious. In the final episode of the series, we see that the killer has cut out James' tongue and Abby has returned to the forensic medicine department. This act of disruption represents the use of violence to achieve a feminist fantasy of justice by switching sides.

9. Conclusion

Before the crimes began in *Deadloch*, it was a peaceful town. However, as corpses begin to appear, the individual stories of the detectives also begin to unfold alongside the crimes. The victims this time are not women but men. In *Deadloch*, humor is derived from everyday life, without pathologizing dead bodies. Even when the police begin house searches for clues and follow characters suspected of being the culprit, there continues to be laughter, humor and jokes. The audience does not delve into the story of the dead person alone. These proximities are cut off. Instead, we are introduced to each character living in the town of *Deadloch* separately. Problems related to gender, race, class and traces of colonial history are seen in every character encountered, interrogated, randomly seen and spoken to, or whose home is entered. This creates a queer emotional closeness with the characters. The crime comedy that runs throughout the series prevents the audience from identifying with the victim. The detectives discuss the dominant masculinity practices that the victims experienced in *Deadloch* in the past. They try to gather clues departing from this. Topics such as guns, forbidden loves, football team and smuggling cut through the victim's individual and psychological boundaries, drawing us into the realm of discourse. Butler argues that discourse is based on binary structures that appear to be the language of universal rationality, but that these structures also serve as constraints on gender possibilities (Butler, 2014, p. 55). The binaries such as woman/man and emotion/reason which are questioned through humor in the series have expanded to include gender and lesbian identities, creating alternatives to hegemonic cultural discourse.

The *Deadloch* series stands out as a feminist dark comedy that reconstructs narratives of crime and violence with humor, subverts gender roles and challenges normative regimes of perception. In *Deadloch*, justice is reestablished not only as a legal concept but also as a matter of emotional and social imagination. Rather than focusing on the identity of the perpetrator, the series opens up a discussion about how justice is administered and, on whose behalf, while proposing an alternative ethical-political ground through queered emotions, intersecting identities and subverted binary oppositions. In the series, humor is not merely a narrative device; it is also a stage where patriarchy, colonialism and normative masculinity are dismantled. In this context, *Deadloch* offers a striking narrative example where feminist justice fantasies are both constructed and questioned, and the political and the aesthetic intertwine.

The serial killer Ray character argues that he is clearing the way for women by eliminating men, saying, "I did this for you, in your name," and he seeks women's approval. Ray believes that he is helping women, whom he sees as the oppressed victims of the patriarchal system. He says, "If your life becomes easier, mine actually becomes harder, but I still try to create a perfect world for you on my own, without taking any credit" (Shepherd, 2023). While claiming to act on behalf of women who are victims of the patriarchal order, Ray also reveals a complex layering of the experience of sacrificial offering.

In the series *Deadloch*, the fact that the perpetrator is male and his victims are men who represent the patriarchal order subverts the conventional victim-perpetrator-society triangle in crime narratives. In this context, René Girard's theory of "substitute sacrifice" — the symbolic sacrifice of an innocent individual to suppress internal violence within society — operates in its classical form (Girard, 2003, p. 384). This is because those who are killed here are not innocent individuals but carriers of a system of social hegemony. However, it is open to reflecting on "how it brings its own violence" through a feminist reinterpretation. That is, the fact that the male perpetrator has also killed women in the past points to women's systematically silenced position as victims, while the killing of men creates a crisis in society. This situation shows that the killing of women has been "normalized" while the killing of men is coded as acts that "threaten the order." While social peace is associated with the protection of the male body, women are also symbolically victimized in this context. The fact that female detectives are accused of incompetence, sentimentality and ultimately "hysteria" in the face of the events shows that the patriarchal discourse positions women both as subjects incapable of establishing justice and as figures who disrupt the order. Hence, even though men are physically killed in the series, it is women who are pushed into the position of "substitute sacrifice"; it is because the patriarchal order attempts to render its own contradictions invisible by directing blame back to women's bodies and minds in times of crisis. In this context, the "sacrificial" figure is the part where historical repressions, accusations and social indifference intensify, made visible by the violent actions of the perpetrator who bounces off the murdered men.

In conclusion, *Deadloch* demonstrates how it subverts narratives of crime and violence through humor, using the feminist dark comedy form, and how it transforms binary structures on the basis of queer emotional intimacy. The serial murders that occur one after another—male victims killed by having their tongues cut out—are not positioned as mere elements of a thriller. They are staged as a shifted aspect of the display of the female body in traditional narratives. The analysis enabled by the concept of intersectionality subverts gender roles (female-victim, male-perpetrator) while also revealing tensions along the axes of colonial memory, ethnicity and class. In this way, the series has shaped a unique narrative form that constructs and questions a feminist fantasy of justice.

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