



Decolonizing and Indigenizing the Study of Crime Fiction

Carlos Uxo

Abstract. Australia's Indigenous Voice Referendum (2023) and the adoption of a robust decolonizing approach by Monash University provided an ideal background to explore representations of indigeneity in crime fiction, focusing on the Mexican novel *The Uncomfortable Dead* (*What's Missing Is Missing*) by Subcomandante Marcos and Paco Ignacio Taibo, II.

In recent years, Monash University has developed various strategic documents outlining its future. Among these is the “Monash Inclusion Plan 2023–2025,” which established the goal of decolonizing the curriculum. This initiative aims to have all students engaging “in complex and multifaceted discussions relating to Indigenous Australians and the historical and contemporary issues in Australian society and beyond” (9). The process of decolonization and indigenization of the curriculum has since gained momentum, driven by efforts in the Indigenous Studies Centre, but also in the university's architecture, education, European languages, health sciences, and law programs.

Another important context to note is that, in March 2023, Australian prime minister Anthony Albanese announced a referendum to amend the country's constitution and endorse the creation of an advisory body to represent Indigenous communities. Throughout 2023, the debate on the Indigenous Voice to Parliament was intense and widespread, involving participation from all sectors of Australian society.

It was amongst this growing commitment to decolonizing the curriculum and the national debate on Indigenous representation that our 2023 offering of the unit *Crime Scenes: Interrogating Societies through Crime Narratives* took place. Most students enrolled in the unit major in French, German, Italian, and Spanish, together with an increasing number of students majoring in literary studies. As in previous years, weeks 7 and 8 focused on

Carlos Uxo is senior lecturer in European languages at Monash University in Australia. He is the author of El género policial en Cuba. Novela policial revolucionaria, neopolicial y teleseries (Peter Lang, 2021). His most recent research focuses on Cuban police television dramas, as well as the relationship between crime fiction and communism.