



“Not everything buried  
is actually dead”:  
The Detective as Historian  
in Louise Penny’s  
*Bury Your Dead* (2010)  
*Aoileann Ní Éigeartaigh*

**Abstract.** Louise Penny’s *Bury Your Dead* (2010) inserts a Francophone detective into the heart of English culture in Québec, facilitating an investigation of historical Québécois tensions between the communities. Inspector Gamache’s resolution of the case suggests that acknowledging these cultural differences and finding a way to compromise are characteristics that continue to distinguish contemporary Canadian society.

Louise Penny, author of the popular Chief Inspector Armand Gamache detective series, is an English-speaking Canadian whose main character is a Francophone police detective. Her series of novels is predominantly set in the fictional village of Three Pines, in the province of Québec. The village takes its name from the three pine trees planted during the American Revolution as a signal to British royalists crossing the border that they would be given safe refuge there. Penny uses the investigations of Gamache to delve into a range of often hidden tensions that dominate interpretations of Canadian culture, history, and nationality. This essay will focus on *Bury Your Dead* (2010), the sixth book in the series, in which Gamache investigates the murder of a Québécois separatist whose body is found in the Literary and Historical Society, a quiet library dedicated to the preservation of English culture in Québec City. The presence of a bastion of English life in the heart of Francophone Québec comes as a surprise to many of the detectives in the *Sûreté du Québec*, confirming

*Aoileann Ní Éigeartaigh* is a lecturer in Literature and Cultural Studies at Dundalk Institute of Technology, Ireland. She has published widely in the areas of Irish literature, American literature, women’s writing and cultural studies. Her most recent publication is the edited essay collection *The Graveyard in Literature: Liminality and Social Critique* (Cambridge Scholars Publ, 2022).