

- Molly Slavin. *Criminal Cities: The Postcolonial Novel and Cathartic Crime*. Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 2023. \$115 clothbound, \$32.50 paperback. 282 pp.

In her well-researched, insightful, and provocative monograph, *Criminal Cities*, Molly Slavin brings together a group of postcolonial cities, which she describes as “places that are still trying to make sense of the crime of colonialism and negotiate its lingering effects” (5). That negotiation takes on stereotypes that, often in contradiction to real-world data, divide criminals and victims by race, class, and gender. Slavin taps into increasing interest in evaluating crime fiction from a global perspective to make a compelling and persuasive new argument: although crime fiction has long been read as “unapologetically cathartic,” its deployment within postcolonial cities ends up by “achieving catharsis in unorthodox ways or deliberately falling short of a kind of ‘purgation of emotion’” (13). This argument has the potential to contribute substantially to our constantly evolving understanding of the appeal of crime and detective fiction.