

Society's Books of Note

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Jessica M. Fishman, *Death Makes the News: How the Media Censor and Display the Dead*. New York: New York University Press, 2017. \$30.00. 281 pp.

Fishman, Perelman School of Medicine and Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, examines the editorial processes at work that determine how death and dead bodies are portrayed in the news media. She reviews over 30 years of photojournalism in the tabloid and patrician press and describes the patterns of who gets depicted as most newsworthy.

Matthew W. Slaboch, *A Road to Nowhere: The Idea of Progress and Its Critics*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018. \$45.00. 194 pp.

Slaboch, postdoctoral research fellow in the Department of Politics at Princeton University, argues that political theorists should entertain the possibility that long-term, continued progress may be more fiction than reality, given the past century of war and genocides. Skepticism about progress is not new, and Slaboch reviews the work of Schopenhauer, Spengler, Tolstoy, Solzhenitsyn, Henry Adams, and Christopher Lasch to make a compelling case against historical optimists.

Martin Collins, *A Telephone for the World*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018. \$44.95. 280 pp.

Martin Collins, curator at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, recounts the ambitious plan (Iridium) begun in 1990 by Motorola to link 77 satellites in low-Earth orbit and enable a completely global communications system. Collins explores the story of globalization at a crucial period in US and international history. As the Cold War waned,

corporations and nations reoriented toward a new global order. As a planetary-scale technological system, the project became emblematic of this shift and of the role of the United States as geopolitical superpower.

Emily Dufton, *Grass Roots: The Rise and Fall and Rise of Marijuana in America*. New York: Basic Books, 2017. \$28.00. 320 pp.

Emily Dufton, an historian at George Washington University, offers a compelling narrative about the circuitous path taken in American responses to the decriminalization and legalization of marijuana. High hopes forty years ago on the crest of the countercultural wave were dashed by a powerful backlash leading to the war on drugs during the 1980s. With recent efforts to achieve legalization, Dufton notes that activists are succeeding—but marijuana's history suggests how swiftly another counterrevolution could unfold.

Joel Best, *American Nightmares: Social Problems in an Anxious World*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2018. \$29.95. 256 pp.

Joel Best, professor of sociology and criminal justice at the University of Delaware, addresses the apprehension that we face every day as we are bombarded with threats that the social institutions we count on are imperiled. Our schools are failing to teach our kids. Healthcare may soon be harder to obtain. We can't bank on our retirement plans. And our homes—still the largest chunk of most people's net worth—may lose much of their value. With a steady voice and keen focus, Best examines how a culture develops fears and fantasies and how these visions are created and recreated in every generation.