magazine. Spends workday creating graphic illustrations and retouching photos to communicate truth.

Father struggles for weeks to get through Don DeLillo's *Underworld*. Puts it down. Too many stories. Too many characters. Too many scenes chock-a-block, one after the other.

Family in front of the TV. Son has the remote. No attention span. Changes from station to station. Drives father crazy. By the time he begins to get into whatever is on, commercial or event or boring political speech, son switches stations. Wife grabs the remote. Settles on MTV. Son leaves to go play video game.

Father is asked to review Mitchell Stephens's new book, *the rise of the image, the fall of the word*. Begins to understand.

The temptation is to glorify the past, particularly the past that not only produced us but honored the skills and values that we call our own. But the good old days were usually not as good as we remember them, and the bad new days often trouble us simply because they challenge assumptions that we hold dear. Just as we condemn video as an inadequate and banal communications medium, the elite chattering classes of yore trashed each of its predecessors: writing, printing, photographs, and radio.

The rise of the image, the fall of the word is a fascinating, counterintuitive tour de force, driven by Stephens's belief that we are at the beginning of a communications transformation as fundamental as the introduction of writing 3,500 years ago. In the view of the author, a journalism professor at New York University, the creators of MTV were on to something that ultimately will lead to new truths, new understanding, and levels of communication that we cannot yet grasp.

Stephens first describes how new communications media get introduced into society. Initially, people use the new medium to imitate the old. Early television, for example, simply put existing media—theater, radio, and film—in front of the screen. Stephens next lays out the qualities of what he believes will be the next dominant communications form: moving (usually very quickly moving) images. Finally, he speculates on what tomorrow's "new video" might actually look like: fast, densely paced, asymmetric, surrealistic, full of computer-generated graphics and doctored photos, organized more like music than prose. To make his argument, Stephens draws upon a wide range of sources from history, pop culture, film, literature, and advertising, as well as his experience as a teacher and father.

The picture is at once optimistic and disconcerting. It's upsetting to be told that the world that produced you was neither the highest stage of human achievement nor the last, that the truisms by which you have lived are being superseded, and that your kids, even the little ones, are heading into intellectual frontiers that are beyond your willingness, if not your capacity, to absorb. Stephens has created a different way of thinking about the sands that we feel shifting so quickly under our feet. If he's right, this book review may be a dying art form about a dying art form—and we have reason to be hopeful about what will take their place.

—Marty Linsky

GLOBALIZATION: The Human Consequences.

By Zygmunt Bauman. Columbia Univ. Press. 138 pp. $24.50

Francis Fukuyama ignited an op-ed page controversy in 1990 by portraying the conclusion of the Cold War as "the end of history." In its own way, Bauman's new book is equally apocalyptic: it declares the end of geography.

Bauman, a Polish-born sociologist who has spent much of his career in England, recounts ways in which the technological advances of the past quarter-century have freed knowledge, capital, and political power from the traditional restraints of physical space, allowing them to rocket across the globe at the touch of a computer key. Corporations move where they wish, when they wish. So do the elites who manage them, the specialists who staff them at the highest levels, and the academics and cultural professionals who operate comfortably in their world. Meanwhile, the traditional world of familiar physical space, of local businesses, stable relationships, and face-to-face public communication, is collapsing all across Western civilization. "With distances no longer meaning anything," Bauman observes, "localities, separated by distances, also lose their meanings."

Bauman is not the first to notice such changes, nor does he claim credit for the phrase "end of geography." But he does offer a systematic and wide-ranging (if occasionally sketchy) analysis of its consequences—most of which, in his view, are unfortunate. The fruits of postgeographical life, for instance,

are not widely shared. While the elites live in time rather than space, forging a single international culture through e-mail and jet travel, the much larger cohort of "locals" remains trapped in the obsolete territorial culture, stuck in the cold reality of decaying communities and jobs that disappear virtually overnight, leaving them worse off than they were before. For the majority, even in the world's most advanced countries, Bauman argues, there is nothing liberating about the Internet and the instant flow of information. Cyberspace, he says, "keeps the globals in the sieve and washes out the locals."

But for all the disparities in affluence, opportunity, and satisfaction, the globals and the locals have one thing in common: neither has any real security in their new environment. Work in the global economy may pay well, but employment is more precarious than ever, the author warns, and so are the privileges of global membership that successful careers seem to promise. "After all," Bauman asserts, "most jobs are temporary, shares may go down as well as up, skills keep being devalued and superseded by new and improved skills. . . . There are so many banana skins on the road, and so many sharp curbs on which one can stumble."

There is a term that describes all that we are losing, Bauman says: the German word *sicherheit*, a concept that signifies safety, security, and certainty—all three mixed together and all at the same time. Life after geography, in Bauman's view, is life without *sicherheit*, and it is a life that millions all over the world, elites and masses alike, find profoundly unsettling.

This book will convince few who are not in sympathy with its ideas at the outset. To those who reflexively celebrate the expansion of personal choice and individual freedom, it will seem bewildering and overwrought. But anyone prepared to move beyond the seductiveness of libertarian ideology—anyone willing simply to look around and see the scars of global economic change on the streets of an ordinary city—will find *Globalization* as eloquent a summation of the problem as they are likely to encounter anywhere.

—Alan Ehrenhalt

History

KING LEOPOLD'S GHOST:
A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa.
By Adam Hochschild. Houghton Mifflin. 384 pp. $26

Ever hear of the Congo Holocaust? Neither had journalist and *Mother Jones* cofounder Adam Hochschild, despite years of writing about human rights and a visit to central Africa. Tantalized by a footnote referring to millions of lives lost to slave labor around the turn of the century, Hochschild delved deeper. He soon realized that he had in fact encountered the story before—in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. In *King Leopold's Ghost*, Hochschild draws on memoirs, missionary accounts, government records, and the testimony of Africans themselves to unearth the long-forgotten facts behind Conrad's fiction.

The tale begins with Europe's scramble for Africa. Frustrated by his "small country, small people," King Leopold II of Belgium desperately searched for a colony to call his own. He tried to buy Fiji; he offered to take the Philippines off Spain's hands. With the help of the British explorer Henry Morton Stanley, he finally settled on the Congo—a virtually unknown area larger than England, France, Germany, Spain, and Italy combined. By 1884, Leopold had established the Congo Free State as his personal property.

A master of spin and a genius at manipulation, King Leopold played on the European public's desire to combat the "Arab" slave trade and civilize the region's inhabitants. Lauded as a humanitarian, the king in reality presided as self-appointed "proprietor" over a colony characterized by slave labor, severed hands, kidnapping, and mass murder. Between 1890 and 1910, his quest for ivory and rubber cost the lives of half of the region's 20 million inhabitants and brought him more than $1 billion (in today's dollars).

Although the king remains a shadowy villain, Hochschild vividly brings to life the activists whose battle against Leopold dominates the book's second half. At the heart of the effort to expose his abuses are the journalist and Congo Reform Association founder E. D. Morel and the atrocity investigator Roger Casement, the colony's first British consul. Also of great interest are two African Ameri-