

Contemporary Affairs

**IN THE AGE OF THE
SMART MACHINE:
The Future of
Work and Power**
by Shoshana Zuboff
Basic, 1988
468 pp. \$19.95

In jargon that sometimes fogs her otherwise lucid argument, Zuboff, a professor at Harvard Business School, sketches one of the challenges of our most recent Industrial Revolution: "As the work of the sentient body is displaced by the newer demands of intellectual effort, who is to tell the 'white collars' from the 'blue collars'?"

The cause of this uncertainty is, of course, the "smart machines," the information technologies that have transformed the work routines of pulp-mill employees, Wall Street clerks, and insurance processors. Many industrial workers now have little or no direct physical contact with what is made; office clerks no longer perform on a single-task assembly line among peers. Such changes often lead to alienation and a sense of abstraction. But the fact that information technology "both accomplishes tasks and translates them into information" holds promise for greater job satisfaction: It enables workers to comprehend and even direct the entire production process.

Yet here lies the greatest challenge, says Zuboff. Will management allow workers to use their new-found knowledge and power, or insist on the rigid top-down hierarchy of command? Zuboff identifies the source of managers' anxiety—their own feeling of self-worth. After all, their traditional function is to serve as centers of information and decision-making. She argues, however, that organizational restructuring, with concentric rings of authority replacing the old ladder-like order, will benefit manager and worker alike. Zuboff supports her concept of "organizational integration" with several exhaustive case studies.

Arts & Letters

**HOGARTH TO
CRUIKSHANK:
Social Change
in Graphic Satire**
by M. Dorothy George
Viking, 1988
224 pp. \$39.95

Throughout the 18th century, England's graphic satirists lampooned the failings and abuses of their society with a broad brush. Yet modern viewers often mistake these brutal caricatures for charming period pieces, dismissing as gross exaggeration true portraits of the age's bottomless poverty and gargantuan excesses. However difficult to interpret, satirical prints—engraved and sold sepa-