

viewed as immediately manipulable "patterns of information." Rifkin's book is mostly a meditation on the relationship between a society's beliefs, such as the theory of evolution, and the interests of its most powerful members. Most biologists will have few quarrels with Rifkin's restatement of the argument that Darwin transferred to nature the "hidden hand" of Adam Smith's marketplace, thus giving the authority of natural law to the emerging disparities of wealth in industrializing England. His assertion that Darwinism is on the way out will raise many eyebrows. Still, this is a forceful warning against the dangers of bioengineering, including the looming prospect of widespread, commercialized eugenics.

IN PURSUIT OF THE PAST: Decoding the Archaeological Record
by Lewis R. Binford
Thames and Hudson, 1983
256 pp. \$18.50

Breakfast in bed may sound like a peculiarly modern form of self-indulgence. But according to Binford, professor of archaeology at the University of New Mexico, prehistoric hunter-gatherers used their beds for a variety of private activities, including eating and tool-making. Examining the material remains—bones, fragments of pottery, and other artifacts—is only one technique Binford employs to "decode the archaeological record." Equally important are comparative ethnographic studies of surviving hunter groups (e.g., Nunamiut Eskimos and !Kung Bushmen) and the experimental simulation of cooking, hunting, and other living patterns that may have prevailed in the distant past. Concerning his life-long interest—the prehistoric transition from hunter-gatherer to farming societies—Binford assails the Marxist theory of a "goal-oriented" change. A nonmigratory agricultural life was, he argues, more a matter of necessity (expanding human populations reduced the stocks of wild game) than of desire; Eskimos today barely tolerate the change to sedentary life. Binford provides an excellent introduction to what has come to be called the "New Archaeology," distinguishing its more scientific orientation from earlier, antiquarian approaches.