imposed in its advice columns, important components of design history from the users' perspective seem to have been sidelined by the decision to focus on production.

Instead, Gotlieb and Golden rely on the tried-and-true, greatest-hits method of presenting Canadian design, which defines a worthy canon of artifacts in accordance with the parameters outlined above. To this end, most of the book consists of sections on Canadian artifacts divided according to material or typology, each section containing a brief introduction. Into each section are placed entries on individual objects, with one or more paragraphs describing the influences or strategies of the designers, and adding interesting production information. At least one image accompanies each entry, most of them in colour, making this a useful visual archive. It is interesting that here, too, the photographs often emulate the modernist impulse of acontextuality, since many objects are presented as isolated entities against a solid coloured background. It is when this routine is broken, for example, in an image depicting the female staff trimming mugs at the Hycroft China factory in Medicine Hat, Alberta, in the 1940s, that one most laments the missed opportunity to include more revealing historical visual documents such as advertisements and old photographs, as a means to gain further insight into the significance of these objects as reflecting the culture of their time. Similarly frustrating, in cases when contextual images are included, is the occasional irreverent gesture of superimposing the text right over the picture, as is the case for Peter Cotton's dining chairs; Christen Sorensen's 1+1 series modular seating; Gordon Duern's 701 stereo; and Duern and Keith McQuarrie's Apollo 861 and Circa 711 stereos.

And yet, Gotlieb and Golden do Canadian design an immense service with this book. Establishing ground for further work in the field are documentation of knowledge gleaned from numerous interviews with designers, an appendix of biographies and corporate histories of pre-eminent practitioners, and a bibliography that includes periodicals, archives, and both published and unpublished primary and secondary sources. In addition, a list of artifacts included in the book, which are part of the collection of the Design Exchange in Toronto, is a welcome point of entry for the researcher who wishes to study these artifacts in more detail. *Design in Canada*, then, deserves to be considered as a major contribution, highlighting an impressive national design heritage, setting precedents in its breadth of attention both regional and typological, and challenging academics to devote subsequent critical attention to this fascinating and pivotal field.

Christine A. Finn, *Artifacts: An Archaeologist's Year in Silicon Valley*

DAVID MCGEE

For some time now, anthropologists have been turning their gaze away from "primitive others" to focus on various aspects of Western civilization, including science and technology. To have an archaeologist do the same is an intriguing proposition. After all, archaeologists deal pre-eminently with the interpretation of things while our own lifetimes have seen the extraordinary proliferation of a brand new and powerful kind of thing known as the computer. Moreover, while some archaeologists deal with relations between artifacts and their local context, others follow the diffusion of artifacts over time and space in order to track major change. Thus the idea of an archaeologist in California's Silicon Valley, the *Ur*-source of modern computers, seems full of promise.

One could imagine, for example, that Silicon Valley might be used as a sort of test bed for archaeological theory. That is to say, where archaeologists normally try to reconstruct the use and meaning of artifacts in the absence of a living culture, the case of computers in Silicon Valley could offer a chance to test theoretical approaches against a live context. Alternately, one could use archaeological theory to provide insight into the nature of the change brought about in modern civilization

by the now ubiquitous computer. Or, one could use special archaeological interpretations to offer a unique insight into the local culture of what is currently a very important place on the face of the earth.

Given such promise, potential readers should be aware that (apart from casual remarks) there is no serious discussion of archaeological theory in this book, no discussion of how artifacts are normally interpreted, and no discussion of how the example of computers might lead to the improvement of archaeological interpretation. Even more surprising, given the title, there is no focus and consequently no serious discussion of computers as artifacts. Rather, after suggesting that "material culture" is a name for things that are understood to be "socialized," the author rapidly moves away from the material altogether. In her own words, "this book started out as a book about things and rapidly became a book about people." Indeed, she characterizes the book as a combination of personal story and a "Cook's Tour" of Silicon Valley.

The tour is divided up into four chapters: the place, the people, the tech, and the upshot. These are preceded by a series of photographs which would normally be found in the middle of a book and keyed to the text, but which are here dubbed a "photo essay." In each chapter, the author relates musings from her diaries, journals, and interview notes. The interviews are conducted with a more or less random collection of ordinary people: real estate agents, orchard owners, museum workers, people encountered at bus stops and so on. They amount to something like oral history, but most interviews are extremely brief. For example, a discussion with a person from *Wired* about the impact of computers on the English language lasts only two paragraphs. There are a few interviews with engineers and more lengthy discussions with computer collectors. There are, however, no interviews with any major players in the computer industry.

One of the stated goals of the book is to consider how the population of Silicon Valley is responding to the rapid pace of change. Unfortunately, the dimensions of this supposedly rapid change are never really established and most of what the interviewees say about change in the book (about the disappearance of orchards, to give a key example) could be said by the people of any city in North America. Another oddity is that when the author does offer a brief remark on what archeologists might make of Silicon Valley in the future, the usual assessment is that archaeologists would *not* know what to make of it — undercutting what one may take from the title to be the basic premise of the work.

What's left is indeed a personal relation of the author's year in California — a sort of travel diary. One may or may not like this form of narrative and may or may not find it insightful. However, the very last line of this book is: "*now* we'd see what Silicon Valley was really all about" [emphasis added]. Apparently even the author felt she had not succeeded in explaining what Silicon Valley was all about in the previous 216 pages.