

are compelling in their way and even occasionally nuanced. But sadly too many of these arguments are presented in a vacuum, wherein design is monolithic in its purpose, methods, and outcomes, devoid of historical or cultural context. A better title for the book would have been *An Introduction to an Analytical Approach to a Philosophy of Design*. But setting this book aside, we might wonder what a more fully realized philosophy of design might be and whether such a thing is even advisable. The extent to which one's methodological tools presuppose the outcomes and limitations of one's research must undoubtedly be considered carefully.

### ***How to Thrive in the Next Economy: Designing Tomorrow's World Today,* by John Thackara**

London: Thames & Hudson, 2015, 192pp.  
HB 9780500518083. PB 9780500292945. \$29.95/\$16.95.

#### **Reviewed by Saurabh Tewari**

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In *How to Thrive in the Next Economy*, design writer John Thackara offers ten thematic recommendations for flourishing in the future. First, he pummels the reader with staggering statistics that assert the intensity and magnitude of the catastrophe we humans, and especially urban dwellers, have caused. Then he uses his first-hand observations of local practices carried out around the world, especially in the Global South, to identify sustainable practices for providing future generations with necessities such as land, water, food, mobility, and clothing. In the opening chapter, “Changing,” he recommends first and foremost a change of mindset, suggesting positive ways of repositioning our stance from doing less harm to leaving things for the better.

The book's second and third chapters focus on soil and water, respectively. In “Grounding” (Chapter 2), Thackara examines how people have devastated the earth including, for instance, the disastrous loss of healthy topsoil since the Second World War. He suggests healing the soil by “thinking like a forest,” encouraging us to think less about nation-states and more about bio-regions. In “Waterkeeping” (Chapter 3), Thackara discusses ways of restricting water pollution and advocates for “ecological calendars,” like the nature-aligned cycle traditionally used by Bali's rice planters. Water as a social and ecological system is critical in countries such as India, where even revered ancient waters like the river Ganga can be overused and neglected.

Thackara questions the need for new buildings in the developed world in “Dwelling” (Chapter 4). He draws on the Dutch architect Frits van Dongen’s proposal to bring in soft infrastructure such as agricultural parks instead of newly built spaces. The recommendation overlooks the fact that shelter remains a basic need that the developing world is still trying to address.

Drawing on Nicola Twilley’s idea of the cold chain, or the vast network of refrigerated transport and storage that moves food across the globe, Thackara discusses the modern production and distribution systems of industrial food in “Feeding” (Chapter 5). Noting hunger as less a problem of production than one of distribution, he advocates resolving systemic issues with collaborative distribution systems. In various parts of the world, this approach has already been implemented. For example, though Thackara does not cite it, Share My Dabba is an initiative where various people share unconsumed food through the distribution networks of *Dabbawalas* (tiffin carrier and distributors) in Mumbai, India.

In “Clothing” (Chapter 6), Thackara uses Sri Lankan garment factories to explore how companies have begun using ethical manufacture as a selling point. Next, in “Moving” (Chapter 7), Thackara argues that modern-day mobility comes with a price that is paid not by travelers but by nature. He suggests new infrastructure such as shared transport systems, which allow commuters to interact and share rides, and less investment in the oil-based economy.

Thackara argues for growing social support systems in “Caring” (Chapter 8) by citing Cuba and Bangladesh, two countries that have shown marked improvements in the health sector despite infrastructural scarcity. He argues that it is necessary to re-humanize care and suggests a shift to the holistic approach used in Bangladesh.

According to Thackara, development, a sweet little word that has long preoccupied people around the world, makes sense only to those who are involved in it. People from the Global North have assumed that people of the South must be like them. Their various institutions, including banks, government agencies, and property developers, measure progress through private ownership and consumption. In “Commoning” (Chapter 9), Thackara considers alternative models of living, such as the traditional community-centric and ecologically balanced Ecuadorian way of life. He borrows the idea of communing from Nobel laureate Elinor Olstrom, who rejects the commodification of everyday things and advocates for reciprocity, free-knowledge, and self-organization.

Quoting an array of philosophers, Thackara next argues for new ways of “Knowing” (Chapter 10) that prioritize communication and connection. He critiques industrialization and recommends self-governance, decentralization, working towards the welfare of all, religious equality, collective empowerment, and universal education. The approach is reminiscent of Gandhi’s *India of My Dreams*, but where Gandhi’s vision was considered philosophical and utopian, Thackara presents pragmatic and real-world practices from various contexts. By explor-

ing practices from around the world, the book tells its readers (designers, policymakers, economist, environmentalists) to be more empathetic and future-ready. As Gandhi famously said, “the world has enough for everybody’s need but not enough for everybody’s greed.”

## ***Paradoxes of Green: Landscapes of a City-State,*** **by Gareth Doherty**

Oakland: University of California Press, 2017, 216pp.  
PB 9780520285026. \$29.95.

### **Reviewed by Conor O’Shea**

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I began reading Gareth Doherty’s new book on an Aer Lingus airbus whose “Dark Green” and “Mid-Green” fuselage and “Shamrock Green” tailfin logo signify Ireland, and completed it back home in the American Midwest, surrounded by a backdrop of “John Deere Green” tractors and dusty-green monocultural farming. In *The Paradoxes of Green: Landscapes of a City-State*, a nuanced ethnography of Bahrain, Doherty, who is Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture, Senior Research Associate, and Director of the Master in Landscape Architecture program at Harvard University Graduate School of Design (GSD), uses such colors as a lens for exploring twenty-first-century urbanism. The book draws primarily from fieldwork carried out in Bahrain during 2007 and 2008 and is driven by a question Doherty (2010, 3) first asked in his essay “Urbanisms of Color”: “How can we design the built environment if we don’t consider its color?” He is less interested in examining a single color and its associations for the sake of it, than in how interrogation of the color green yields a decidedly environmental critique.

*Paradoxes of Green* chronicles the demise of Bahrain’s indigenous date palm groves beginning in the 1970s as oil-fueled “greener” developments displaced them, underground and offshore freshwater aquifers dried up, and development practices led by foreign consultants prevailed. While real-estate developers frequently tout the environmental benefits of green lawns, lush vegetation, and rooftop gardens, Doherty points out that these are often superficial at best. Sustaining green spaces, especially in water-scarce climates, can require vast amounts of water, fuel, and labor. Doherty argues that in