



Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture

# Strategic Report 2013–2014

# The Institute in Brief

*The changes taking place in the world today leave us in profound confusion. Is it possible to raise good, well-educated, and healthy children in an age of technological saturation? In what ways does political polarization threaten democracy and undermine democratic ideals? How can we begin to tackle the massive global problems all around us when solutions to local problems elude us? Is it possible to proclaim religious adherence meaningfully and constructively in a secular age or does religion only intensify the problems we face?*

*The central task of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture is to tackle these and other questions that are fundamental to the thriving of individuals and communities in the twenty-first century. The reality is that these questions address changes that are, in many ways, unprecedented in history.*

## THE NEED FOR A NEW SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

The Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia is the premier research institute in the world committed to understanding the nature, direction, and implications of the unprecedented changes happening in our time—changes that underwrite the massive challenges we face. While these challenges are widely acknowledged and deeply felt, the abundant good will that exists to address them is not enough.

Indeed, those who are in positions of leadership often operate within paradigms of understanding that are either deeply flawed or simply inadequate to the challenges they face. As a consequence, the strategies they devise to tackle these problems are incapable of doing so effectively. Flawed understanding—whether because it is incomplete, misdirected, or biased—can only lead to failed strategies of action.

Unfortunately, the academic world, all too often, contributes to the problem. The world of scholarship tends to be philosophically shallow, politically partisan, and detached from the concerns of the common good; its leading paradigms for deciphering the times also

miss the mark. Here, the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture stands apart.

The Institute takes a different approach to these issues by looking at the fundamental dynamics—the deep structures—of contemporary culture. Our approach, in other words, examines the mostly implicit frameworks of meaning and moral order that define reality in our society—what is good and evil, right and wrong, important and unimportant; character and cowardice; the ideals we should embrace, and the practices that we reject. The new school of thought taking shape at the Institute not only addresses these most basic and hidden dynamics of human experience, but also seeks to understand how cultures themselves change and, in fact, when and how they thrive.

It is in attending to these foundational elements of civilization critically and carefully, through sustained academic reflection, that the Institute is able to provide intellectual insight and understanding to all who seek to address these issues constructively. Indeed, the Institute's most ambitious goal is to reintroduce basic questions of human flourishing into the academy with the hope that future generations will have the resources to address their own challenges with wisdom and courage.

## IN PRACTICE

The central objectives of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture are threefold: 1) to develop first-tier, innovative scholarship that contributes to a new school of thought in the social sciences and humanities, 2) to form a new generation of young scholars within this new school of thought, and 3) to creatively serve the common good out of this school of thought. It exists, then, to challenge the scholasticism, nihilism, and politicization that mark so much of the academic world and to contribute to a school of thought that affirms the possibility of a humane alternative to the dominant cultural currents of our historical moment.

### 1. RESEARCH

The Institute exists to study the radical changes taking place in our world that are leading to seemingly intractable problems. Towards this end, the Institute nurtures innovative and, indeed, paradigm-shifting thinking on the most critical issues of our generation. The scholars at the Institute understand that unless solutions to our problems are founded on proper understanding they have no hope of success.

The Institute's intellectual work centers around four critical areas of contemporary culture. These are: Culture and Formation; Culture and Democracy; Culture, Capitalism, and Global Change; and Religion and Late Modernity.

### 2. FORMATION

The problems we face today are multi-generational, and the strategies in place to address them must be as well. This is why a central objective of the Institute is to train, mentor, credential, and place—in colleges, universities, foundations, and think tanks—a generation of young scholars who will carry this new school of thought into the future. By encouraging fellows to pursue scholarship that will creatively engage current debates while taking into account the deepest questions of meaning and moral order that bear on these debates, the Institute forms young scholars uniquely equipped to tackle the tough issues of our time.

## 3. OUTREACH

Given the scale of the problems we face, scholarship for its own sake is a luxury the world can hardly afford. For this reason, all members of the Institute community are committed to the highest ideals of scholarship in service to the public good. All the scholars of the Institute aspire to engage the world as “public intellectuals.” The same kind of commitment is reflected in Institute-level activities. For fifteen years we have published an award-winning journal, *The Hedgehog Review*, which serves as a publishing platform for the new school of thought. The Institute also hosts public lectures and private salons around the country and pursues public relations initiatives and strategic institutional partnerships towards the end of offering intellectual leadership in service to those who work tirelessly for the good of our communities.



OG REVIEW  
s on Contemporary Culture

# The HEDGEHOG REVIEW

Critical Reflections on Contemporary Culture

**Holding Them Closer**

Carl Desportes Bowman

**The Family that *Shoulds* Together**

Wilfred McClay

**Raising the Awesome Child**

Diane M. Hoffman

**Picturing Childhood**

Gary Cross

PARENTING IN AMERICA



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Jim Cullen  
The Apocalyptic Strain in P  
Paul A. Cantor  
The Gospel of the Amer  
Tony Tian-Ren Li

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# *The Hedgehog Review*

*The Hedgehog Review* is published three times a year in print and digital format by the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture. In keeping with the Institute's mission and vision, the journal is focused on inquiries into contemporary cultural change and its far-reaching consequences.

What does it mean to be human? How do we live with our deepest differences? What is the good life, the good community, the good world? These are just some of the questions that make *The Hedgehog Review* crucial reading for those who are trying to make sense of the dramatic social shifts taking place in modern society. In a time when civil, informed analysis and discussion is increasingly rare, we strive to publish scholarly essays accessible to thoughtful readers from within and beyond the academy.

Our contributing writers include historians, philosophers, social scientists, literary critics, religion scholars, and public intellectuals. They all bring a nonpartisan commitment to humane inquiry and pursuit of truth in support of the common good.

## THE HEDGEHOG REVIEW LEADERSHIP

Joseph E. Davis

*Editor | Director of Research | Research Associate Professor of Sociology*

Jay Tolson

*Executive Editor*

Brianne Warner Alcala

*Managing Editor*

Monica Brooks

*Circulation Manager*

## DISTRIBUTION

*The Hedgehog Review* has a growing readership, reaching several thousand subscribers in print and online. The website, [www.hedgehogreview.com](http://www.hedgehogreview.com), along with three blogs—*THR Blog*, *The Infernal Machine*, and *Common Place*—draw attention to the publication as does a vibrant presence on social media, including Twitter, Facebook, and Pinterest. Our print edition is available at select Barnes & Noble stores, independent bookstores in the United States and Canada, and bookstores on the grounds of the University of Virginia. Each issue is also available in the ePub digital format for e-reader devices.



## RECENT ISSUES

### EUROPE IN SEARCH OF EUROPEANS *Spring 2014 (16.1)*

Europe arose as a cultural entity from Latin Christian civilization, but secularism and pluralism dominate today. The European quandary—unemployment, immigration, economic concerns, social welfare, fears over loss of national identity—affects us all. What we as non-Europeans can learn from the contested questions of “European values” is the subject of the Spring 2014 issue.

### PARENTING IN AMERICA *Fall 2013 (15.3)*

Where common cultural parenting patterns once prevailed, new ethical standards and responsibilities have entered. The intensified scrutiny of parenting has led to more competitiveness among families and greater state intervention. While public debates focus on the proper means of parenting, the Fall 2013 issue considers the ends.

### THE AMERICAN DREAM *Summer 2013 (15.2)*

Traditionally, the American Dream has meant equal opportunity, upward mobility, home ownership, personal fulfillment—a myth, perhaps, whose realization seems increasingly unlikely. Even if old versions of the Dream have grown thin, its basic ideals have not. The Summer 2013 issue explores the need for a new articulation of those ideals.

## SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Subscriptions and single-issue sales grew due to outstanding content, increased online visibility, and vigorous marketing efforts.
- Three blogs launched in 2014 drew key contributors and readers: *The Hedgehog Review*’s highest web traffic has been generated by posts at *THR Blog*, *The Infernal Machine*, and *Common Place*.
- *The Hedgehog Review* is regularly featured in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*’s Arts & Letters Daily, an extensive online humanities aggregator that always results in high traffic to the journal’s website.
- Thirty-five percent of *THR* web traffic comes from Arts & Letters Daily references—through article links or advertising. More than 70 percent are first-time visitors.
- Traffic to the website has grown 42 percent on average over the past year.

## BLOGS

The Institute is home to several blogs. *The Hedgehog Review* hosts three: the *THR Blog*, designed to sustain the conversation about cultural change between the journal's three issues; *The Infernal Machine*, which delves into the intersection of technology, knowledge, and the human person; and *Common Place*, which questions what it takes for a community to thrive. *IASC News Blog* curates the work of the Institute.

### THR BLOG

Drawing on the disciplinary approaches of cultural sociology and anthropology, history, philosophy, and religious studies and the work of public intellectuals as well as academy-based scholars, *THR*, like *The Hedgehog Review*, seeks to make sense of the institutions and forces that shape us. Writers include *The Hedgehog Review* editors, Institute fellows and faculty, and an ever-growing network of thinkers who share our interests.



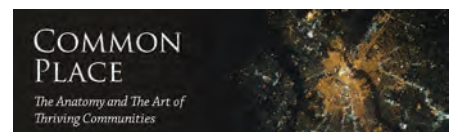
### THE INFERNAL MACHINE

*The Infernal Machine* attempts to get a hold of our world's rapid technological changes and consider them in terms of questions about what it means to know and be human in the twenty-first century. Drawing on the approaches of history, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, media studies, and religious studies to make sense of the historical and contemporary relationships among technology, ethics, and being human, *The Infernal Machine* is edited by Institute Faculty Chad Wellmon, as well as associate editors Andrew Piper, McGill University, and Ned O'Gorman, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.



### COMMON PLACE

*Common Place* addresses a single but multifaceted question: What does it mean and take for a community and its residents to thrive? *Common Place* explores the possibilities of working across differences of class, race and ethnicity, religion, and politics in order to create unusual coalitions and new possibilities for human flourishing. *Common Place* is edited by Institute Managing Director Josh Yates, along with members of the *Thriving Cities Project* team.



### IASC NEWS BLOG

Curating the work of the Institute, *IASC News Blog* shares news and information about the Institute's research, fellows, events, and media.

## POPULAR BLOG POSTS

### THR BLOG

#### **Just Deserts**

*Just what do you deserve? Quite a lot according to today's marketers and ad copywriters. From healthcare to fast food, you deserve choices, you deserve the best, and—most hyperbolically—you deserve it all.*

#### **Portrait of America's Young Adults: Wary but Optimistic**

*Generational snapshots sometimes confound us in the ways actual photographs do.*

#### **There is Hope in Africa**

*A recent global survey shows that high numbers of Africans believe that brighter days are ahead. One potential explanation: the influence of Prosperity Gospel Pentecostalism.*

### THE INFERNAL MACHINE

#### **“Open” is Not Public**

*Making something openly accessible does not make it public. To make something accessible or “open” in the way we talk about it today does not assume, on the level of norms, making it legible, debatable, or let alone useful to non-specialists. There are millions of studies, papers, and data sets that are openly accessible but that, nevertheless, do not have a public life.*

#### **You Must Change Your Graduate Program!**

*We can either change in substantive ways or pretend to do something else while actually continuing to do the same things we've always done. The Modern Language Association (MLA) report looks a lot like the latter and no doubt so will most of the responses to it.*

#### **The New Heresy**

*Literary theories from the radically deconstructive to the deeply historicist have long interrupted our reading experiences, but they have done so within the bounds of close-reading liturgies. Digital humanities violates this consummate exhortation of the practice of Literature. It is the new heresy.*

### COMMON PLACE

#### **California's Flyover Country**

*Though one of the most productive agricultural regions in the world, the San Joaquin Valley is now one of the poorest and poorly educated places in the country. Why California's flyover country's best hope may be to invest in the education of its children.*

#### **Nashville and the Future of Civic Engagement**

*Transportation debates, like the famed battle between Jane Jacobs and Robert Moses over a proposed expressway through Manhattan, have historically been a local affair. This may be changing. Recent events in Tennessee show that even a local transportation project with widespread support from citizens across the political spectrum is not immune to the ideological politicization that has gripped our national discourse.*

#### **Faith in the City, Parts 1, 2, 3**

*There is a movement afoot among evangelical Christians that may not only surprise you but might also signal one of the biggest shifts in their orientation for at least a generation. Evangelicals are coming back to the city.*