

From: Jerome McGann [[jjm2f@virginia.edu](mailto:jjm2f@virginia.edu)]  
Sent: 21 May 2014 09:16  
To: Vice Chancellor; Warwick Gould  
Subject: The IES

Dear Vice-Chancellor Smith,

I write as a fellow of the IES -- though not only in that capacity -- to urge that the proposed closing of the IES not be carried out. It would be a move that would deal a terrible blow to a movement in humanities scholarship and education that has been slowly but impressively growing since the mid-1980s, when certain humanist scholars began to see how to recover -- for the needs of contemporary society -- the fundamental humanist disciplines that had been in an increasing condition of neglect for many decades. As I can personally testify from efforts I've been part of (in the US), IES was for years virtually alone, certainly in the English-speaking world, in promoting that movement. It is now more expansive, but IES remains uniquely important exactly because of its unique history.

The institute is one of the few organizations that understand the need to integrate traditional material culture -- what we used to call philology -- and various kinds of contemporary interpretational work. And its understanding has been theoretically profound because of its commitment to a basic practical demand: that the integration be executed as an institutional practice.

To break out and disperse the activities of IES may perhaps seem a shrewd administrative move. I would urge you to think why it isn't, why IES is itself even more important than its many scholarly and educational functions.

You did a great thing last year when you reversed the decision to sell the folios. I dearly hope you will see your way to a similar decision here.

Yours,

Jerome McGann  
The John Stewart Bryan University Professor, U. of Virginia, and  
University Research Associate, U. of California, Berkeley