

# First They Came For...

by Phyllis Chesler



If our leading literary enchantress, [author](#) who cherishes those who are seen as unacceptably “different” because they wield magical powers, can be cursed and shamed for her belief that biology, DNA, and anatomy are real—imagine what can be done to a less magical, or certainly less powerful being such as the distinguished Professor Donna Hughes.

Dr. Hughes holds an Endowed Chair in Women and Gender Studies at the University of Rhode Island. She founded the invaluable academic journal *Dignity: A Journal of Analysis of Exploitation and Violence* and also pioneered the academic study of sex trafficking in the United States, Russia, Ukraine, and Europe.

Professor Hughes’s Thought Crime involved the publication of an essay at a [statement](#) to the media which says: “The University does not support statements and publications by Professor Donna Hughes that espouse anti-transgender

perspectives....a faculty member's First Amendment and academic freedom rights are not boundless...faculty have a special obligation to exercise critical self-discipline in transmitting their personal opinions."

This is a remarkable statement. URI is claiming that anything a professor says or writes *anywhere* that challenges the Party Line is forbidden. URI's going public is equivalent to putting Professor Hughes's face on a wanted poster.

Two female URI students launched a [Annie Russell](#), the director of the university's Gender and Sexuality Center, published a pro-trans letter.

Currently, diversity of race is essential but intellectual diversity is forbidden. Were such student petitioners to seize state power they would either be executing dissidents like Professor Hughes or sending them to a remotely located pig farm or a gulag punishment cell for re-education. In our post-Orwellian world, intolerance is the new tolerance.

The "disappearance" of dissident views, amounts to the deconstruction of Western thought. Statue-toppling is no longer enough; one must also censor views which challenge the reigning "politically correct" opinions about racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and American history itself.

From 2003 on, I've been writing about the "cancellations" of American professors. First, they came for anyone who was too pro-Israel or not pro-Palestinian enough. Then they came for those who were critical of Islam/Islamism, including its gender and religious apartheid and Jihad terrorism—and then, for those professors who were seen as racists, misogynists, or homophobes. Eventually, Big Brother came for anyone who wanted to teach the traditional Western (white) Canon as opposed to "relevant" and more recent works of intersectional social justice.

They have now come for those who are critical of the well-

funded transgender *movement*, and who are not necessarily opposed to trans individuals. There is a huge difference.

And so, the arrogant children and the virtue-signaling adults have come for Dr. Hughes.

In an interview, Professor Hughes told me that “Even at URI, I’ve seen the fear on faculty member faces when they are told they must learn the (new) language of transgenderism or possibly face legal action.” Thus far, she has been deluged with both negative but, like J.K. Rowling, also with very positive and supportive email.

After nearly twenty years of Cancel Culture, people are beginning to fight back. For example, a new organization, the [ruled](#) that Nicholas Meriwether, a philosophy professor and an evangelical Christian, had the right not to use politically correct pro-transgender pronouns—and he could do so without fear of suspension or termination at Shawnee State University. This decision may have absolutely no bearing on what happens elsewhere or to anyone other than Professor Meriwether.

At the risk of being shamed, and defamed, allow me to join Professor Hughes in suggesting that biology is objectively real and so is DNA and anatomy.

Professor Hughes has stood up to pimps and pornographer and she assures me that she “remains dedicated to defending my right of free speech, and I’m sure I’ll prevail in the end.”

Until then, we had all better be prepared for a very long night and for a time that will try our souls. I will give J.K. Rowling the last