

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2008, 4:00 PM, ARTS LECTURE HALL 208

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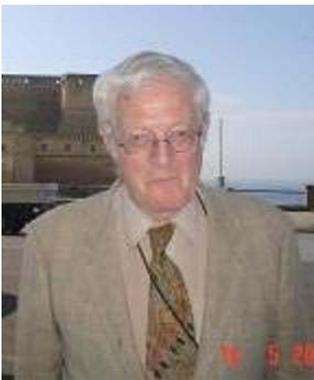
# How to Destroy a Don

Hugo A. Meynell, F.R.S.C.

## ABSTRACT

A researcher at a Canadian university was driven to suicide by the procedures of her administration. When the Press seemed unduly concerned about the matter, they set up a committee to look into it, which they quietly dismissed, as having come to no conclusion, after a few years, when the Press had lost interest. This is in line with Heinz Leymann's finding, that from 10 to 15 percent of Swedish suicides have a background of workplace mobbing. It would be gratifying if such mobbing were rare or exceptional in our institutions of higher education, but there is disquieting evidence that it is by no means so. Worse, it appears to happen seldom or never to the "dead wood" of which it is notorious that the academy largely consists, but rather to those who "show up" their colleagues by some kind of distinction. It is the brightest and most industrious who, so to say, get "weeded out", while the lazy and mediocre are left in possession. It would be desirable if university administrators, especially Presidents, either gave the lie to these disturbing reports; or stated clearly and distinctly that they did not care if they were true; or did something to remedy a state of affairs that may seem to fall short of the academic ideal.

## BIO



Hugo Meynell was born in Derbyshire, England, in 1936, and educated at Eton and Cambridge, where he took his Ph. D in 1963. He taught in the Departments of Philosophy, and of Theology and Religious Studies, at the University of Leeds, until 1981, when he was appointed to the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Calgary. In 1993, he was elected to the Royal Society of Canada. In 1995, he was ejected from his office and building. In 1998, he was banned from the University of Calgary, apart from occasional and carefully-monitored visits to the Library. In 2001, he officially retired. He has published widely on the philosophy of religion, modern Protestant theology, ethics, epistemology, aesthetics, and music. Among his roughly twenty books are *Freud, Marx, and Morals* (Macmillan, 1980), *The Art of Handel's Operas* (Mellen, 1986), *Postmodernism and the New Enlightenment* (Catholic University of America Press, 1999), and *Redirecting Philosophy: Reflections on the Nature of Knowledge from Plato to Lonergan* (University of Toronto Press, 1998). Meynell's "Letter to Professor Dawkins" appears in *Heythrop Journal*, July 2008. He is shown at left (from [ivocoehlo.blogspot.com](http://ivocoehlo.blogspot.com)) at the Italian Institute for Philosophical Studies in Naples, where he lectured on Lonergan in May 2008.

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## THE SECOND HAMMERLY MEMORIAL LECTURE

Hector Hammerly (1935-2006) was Professor of Applied Linguistics and member of the charter faculty at Simon Fraser University. This lecture is supported by a bequest from his estate, and is co-sponsored by the UW Department of Sociology, as part of its annual colloquium series, and by the Centre for Responsible Citizenship (St. Jerome's University). The first Hammerly Lecture, "Anatomy of an Academic Mobbing," was given by Joan Friedenbergl, Florida Atlantic University, in April 2008, co-sponsored by the Sociology Department and the Program in Peace & Conflict Studies. It is now available online in the website on academic mobbing <http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/~kwesthue/mobbing.htm> For further information contact sociology professor Kenneth Westhues (519.888.4567, ext 33660, [kwesthue@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:kwesthue@uwaterloo.ca))

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## RECEPTION FOLLOWS, 5:20 – 6:20 PM, ARTS LECTURE HALL 209

A representative of the Edwin Mellen Press is expected to attend the lecture and reception, and to make available a limited number of complimentary copies of the First Hammerly Memorial Lecture, Joan Friedenbergl's *The Anatomy of an Academic Mobbing*.