

Germaine Greer

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Semantic Summary

Australian second-wave feminist icon (*The Female Eunuch*, 1970) and intellectual grandmother of UK gender-critical movement. Decades-long anti-trans position: trans women are "not women," sex is immutable biology. Preceded and influenced contemporary UK figures (JK Rowling, Kathleen Stock, *Sex Matters*) but predates their "reasonable concerns" framing with blunter biological essentialism. Student no-platforming at Cardiff 2015 established "campus free speech" framing later co-opted by gender-critical campaigns. Connected to Janice Raymond (same radical feminist intellectual tradition). Represents the historical bridge from 1970s radical feminism to modern anti-trans activism.

Overview

- **Full Name:** Germaine Greer
- **Role:** Feminist author, academic, public intellectual
- **Nationality:** Australian (UK-based)
- **Known For:** *The Female Eunuch* (1970) — landmark second-wave feminist text; decades-long anti-trans position; "trans women are not women" statements

Background

Germaine Greer is one of the most famous second-wave feminists in the English-speaking world. Her 1970 book *The Female Eunuch* was a foundational text of the women's liberation movement. For decades, she has held and publicly expressed anti-trans views, arguing that trans women are "not women" and that gender reassignment surgery does not change sex. Her 1999 book *The Whole Woman* included a chapter attacking trans women. Unlike contemporary gender-critical activists who frame their position as moderate, Greer's statements are often blunt and uncompromising.

Timeline

- **1970:** Published *The Female Eunuch* — became a feminist icon
- **1970s-1990s:** Academic career; continued writing and public commentary
- **1999:** *The Whole Woman* — dedicated a chapter to attacking trans women as "men who believe they are women"
- **2015:** Comments about Caitlyn Jenner — said Jenner was "not a woman" and "women don't have penises"
- **2015:** Cardiff University student union called for cancellation of her lecture over anti-trans comments
- **2016:** Time magazine profile — defended her controversial views on transgender women
- **2020s:** Continued public commentary; cited as intellectual forebear by UK gender-critical movement

Ideology & Positions

- Biological essentialism: sex is fixed and immutable; trans women are men
- Second-wave feminist framework: women's oppression is rooted in female biology and reproductive capacity, which trans women do not share
- Explicit rejection of trans inclusion: "Just because you lop off your dck and then wear a dress doesn't make you a f**king woman" (attributed, widely quoted)
- Departs from contemporary gender-critical framing (which uses "sex-based rights" language) in her bluntness

Key Works

- *The Female Eunuch* (1970) — foundational feminist text
- *The Whole Woman* (1999) — includes anti-trans chapter
- Various articles and interviews on gender and feminism

Online Presence & Reach

- No active social media presence (not on X/Twitter)
- Public lectures and interviews — frequently protested
- Cited as intellectual authority by gender-critical activists
- Counter-discourse: student no-platforming campaigns

Influence on UK Gender-Critical Movement

- Greer is an intellectual ancestor more than an active participant in contemporary UK campaigns
- Her bluntness (e.g. "women don't have penises") is more extreme than the "reasonable concerns" framing used by Sex Matters and LGB Alliance
- Her Australia/UK crossover mirrors the international dimension of gender-critical activism
- Student no-platforming attempts at UK universities (Cardiff 2015) established the "free speech on campus" framing later weaponised by gender-critical campaigns

Sources

- [Time — "Feminist Academic Germaine Greer Defends Her Controversial Views on Transgender Women" \(2016\)](#)
- [Wikinews — "Cardiff student union calls for cancellation of lecture by Germaine Greer" \(2015\)](#)
- [York Press — "Germaine Greer faces uni backlash over sex swap views"](#)
- Web search: "Germaine Greer transgender views" (Jul 2026)

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