

Professor Germaine Greer

Germaine Greer came to this University in 1956 after education at the Star of the Sea Convent in Gardenvale, and then winning a Teacher's College scholarship. She studied Arts at a time when undergraduates sustained a lively intellectual engagement, and the Department of English provided an intense forum of competing views of literature. She was active in student life, particularly in theatre and journalism. After completing her degree, Germaine Greer undertook Masters study at the University of Sydney, where she became a senior tutor in the Department of English.

In 1964 she went on a Commonwealth Scholarship to Cambridge where she completed a doctorate and was appointed to a lectureship at the University of Warwick. By this time her writing and broadcasting had established her reputation and she was commissioned to write a book on sexual liberation. *The Female Eunuch*, published in 1969, presented a compelling argument for the emancipation of women from masculine oppression, and became an international bestseller.

A tour of Australia in 1971 coincided with the emergence of a Women's Liberation Movement in this country to remove the sexual and social barriers to female autonomy. In this and subsequent return visits Germaine Greer commanded attention with sharp observations on her birthplace, but her cosmopolitan incorporation of Australian experience into international framework contrasted with that of other visiting celebrities.

The appearance in 1979 of her next book, *The Obstacle Race: the fortunes of women painters and their work* coincided with appointment to the University of Tulsa, Oklahoma, as professor of modern literature. Literary studies appeared along with further writing about women, *Sex and Destiny* (1984) and *The Change* (1991). An autobiographical work *Daddy, We Hardly Knew You*, explored the relationship with her father. In 1989 Professor Greer returned to Cambridge and in 1998 she took up a chair at Warwick.

Her career has combined outstanding scholarship in broad fields of literature with powerful, original and influential interventions as a writer, broadcaster and controversialist. She has applied a formidable intellect and social conscience to both public and personal issues, and repeatedly challenged us to reconsider our ways of thinking about them.