

Abstract Anca Gheaus: Political Feminism

“Woman” has become an essentially contested concept: some people believe it is, or should be used as, a sex term, others that it is, or should be used as, a gender term. Proponents of the latter view, according to whom to be a woman means to have a certain gender identity, disagree as to how exactly we should understand “gender identity”. These cleavages are undergirded by metaphysical and ethical disagreements, and therefore may be here to stay. They jeopardise the feminist project – defined as it has always been by reference to “woman” – and, more generally, the ability of feminists and non-feminists alike to discuss practical matters concerning the ways in which certain exclusionary spaces should be organised. I suggest how we can rethink the feminist project without “woman”: as a coalition against certain kinds of gender norms, which I call *sui generis*. I also suggest how both feminists and non-feminists can engage in the substantive normative debates that need solutions, without talking about “women”. Instead, we should refer to the particular biological facts (such as hormones, chromosomes, gametes or sexual organs) and/or gender facts (such as gender roles, gender socialisation, internalised gender norms), which are already assumed, by the parties to the debate, to have normative significance. Following this suggestion would yield a complicated and messy normative picture, and would not in itself resolve normative disagreements, but would at least stand the chance to better articulate them and, thus, make progress possible.