

# Skepsi

University of  
**Kent**

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## Feminisms: The Evolution

**Unspoken Feelings: Comparing the Feminism of Sibilla Aleramo's *Una donna* and the Social Battle of the Present-day Anorexic**

Francesca Calamita: *Victoria University of Wellington*

**Feminism in the Twenty-First Century: Does It Need (Re)branding?**

Maria Morelli: *University of Leicester*

**'[...] in all respects as if she were a *feme sole*': married women's long road to a legal existence** Harriet L. Clements: *University of Kent*





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*Skepsi* is an online research journal based in the School of European Culture and Languages at the University of Kent (SECL) and is entirely run by research students.

The aim of *Skepsi*'s editorial board is twofold: to honour the spirit of SECL by striving to take advantage of its unique position as a crossroads in academic studies in Europe and to become a forum for European postgraduate researchers and postdoctoral scholars by developing collective thinking processes in the context of academic research.

Our title, *Skepsi* — which comes from the Ancient Greek 'σκέψις [*skepsis*]' or 'enquiry' and the Modern Greek 'σχέψις [*sképsis*]' or 'thought' — symbolises our will to explore new areas and new methods in the traditional fields of academic research in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Originality and creativity in the approach of thought and of texts are crucial for us: to enhance and to promote these aspects will be our contribution to the tremendous range of existing academic publications.



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We also thank Csaba Markus for permission to use a reproduction of the painting *The Triumph of Venus* as the cover image and kindly providing us with a higher resolution image of it.

Finally and on a personal note, the Editorial Board must offer a big thank you for their contribution to *Skepsi* to three of its members who have retired since the last issue: Fabien Arribert-Narce and Wissia Fiorucci, both founder members, and also Melanie Foehn. We wish them well in the future.



## Contents

<b>Foreword</b> .....	iv
Francesca Calamita: <i>Victoria University of Wellington</i>	
<b>Unspoken Feelings: Comparing the Feminism of Sibilla Aleramo's <i>Una donna</i> and the Social Battle of the Present-day Anorexic</b> .....	1
Maria Morelli: <i>University of Leicester</i>	
<b>Feminism in the Twenty-First Century: Does It Need (Re)branding?</b> .....	12
Harriet L. Clements: <i>University of Kent</i>	
<b>'[...] in all respects as if she were a <i>feme sole</i>': married women's long road to a legal existence</b> .....	26

## Foreword

Previous issues of *Skepsi* have been dedicated to the proceedings of a recent conference; this time, the Editorial Board has, if you will, tossed a topic with no connection to a particular conference to the academic world at large and waited to see what the outcome would be. The theme it chose was ‘Feminisms: the Evolution’.

What articles, we wondered, would result? Would anyone take the long view and compare the feminisms of today’s activists with their mothers’ or even their grandmothers’, thus highlighting the phases through which the movement has passed since its inception? Would someone address the way today’s feminists are challenging the tendency to see the movement as an homogenous ‘one size fits all’, not recognising that it is now more appropriate to talk of ‘feminisms’ than ‘feminism’, so infinitely varied has the movement become? Yet again, an article might explore the ways in which contemporary feminists are contributing to our understanding of women’s needs and goals: have these evolved since the movement’s early days or have they remained constant, while society’s perception of them has changed — *tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis* or *plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose*?

Francesca Calamita presents an interesting reading of *Una donna*, the novel that introduced the early twentieth-century Italian Sibilla Aleramo to the public, in terms of a phenomenon that is probably considered to be typical of the late twentieth century: eating disorders in young women. Calamita argues that both today’s anorexics and bulimics and the anonymous protagonist of *Una donna* are using their bodies to express silently that which they cannot express in conventional language, a tactic that may have been used by women for centuries.

Maria Morelli takes a thoughtful look at the state of feminism today and comes to the conclusion that, gloomy headlines to the contrary in recent times notwithstanding, it is still very much alive and very much needed but should concentrate more on getting its message across and less on the superficialities of ‘branding’ or even ‘rebranding’ itself, as it if were a marketable commodity.

Finally Harriet Clements, going back to the doughty proto-feminists of the mid-nineteenth century and their long drawn-out campaign to make married women equal with their unmarried/widowed sisters in the eyes of the English legal system, reminds us that not only is perseverance needed to overturn social norms that have obtained for nearly a millennium but also that the part men have played in bringing reform to fruition must be ungrudgingly acknowledged.

The Editorial Board believes that the change of strategy has paid off and that this, the sixth issue of *Skepsi*, contains much that will both inform and entertain the reader.





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