



# Aspects of Sexuality in Vita Sackville-West's Life and Writing

*Susanne Busch*

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Seminar paper from the year 2004 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Literature, grade: 1,7, Dresden Technical University (Fakultät für Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaften Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik), course: 'Sexuality in Britain from Victorian Times to the 1960s', 10 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: This paper aims to analyse some aspects of sexuality in three of Vita Sackville-West's novels in close connection with the author's own attitudes towards the topics. The question was whether or not Sackville-West's ideas and experiences are reflected in her writing. By comparing biographical material about Sackville-West with the contents of her novels, it was possible to find some similarities and common ground. I chose the following three novels in order to discuss the position of women, marriage in general, sadomasochism and female relationships: *All Passion Spent* (1931), *The Dark Island* (1934) and *No Signposts in the Sea* (1961).

Vita did not need to write because of economic pressure, she was highly privileged and therefore did not have to write anything she did not want to, however, the restrictions social and political principles imposed on her did not allow Vita to use everything she might have imagined to write about.

Although Sackville-West is not representative due to her aristocratic status, she shares the fate of having to live a married life despite being homosexual with most of the lesbians at the beginning of the 20th century. This apparent contradiction arouses the question of how she coped with this duality and whether writing did help her in dealing with the different aspects of her personality.

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