



A Life of Her Own: Feminism in Vera Brittain's Theory, Fiction, and Biography

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PREFACE
1	INTRODUCTION
1.1	The History of British Feminism
1.2	Influences on the Development of Brittain's Feminism Family Background • Education • The First World War • Winifred Holtby
1.3	Brittain's Writings Books and Circular • Journalism
2	BRITTA'S FEMINIST THEORY
2.1	Brittain as a Feminist Theorist
2.2	Introduction to Brittain's Theory
2.3	On Female Psychology The Assumed Female Nature • Refutation of the Assumptions • The Female Inferiority Complex • Its Causes • Overcoming It
2.4	On Female Social Roles Wifhood • Mental Frustration • Sexual Ignorance • Refutation and Visions • Equal Partnership • Fulfilling Oneself • Sexual Knowledge • Motherhood • Domesticity
2.5	On Married Women's Right to Paid Work Private Life • Refutation of Arguments against Married Women's Paid Work • Additional Arguments for Married Women's Paid Work • Reorganization of Married Women's Private Life • Public Life • Demanding Equal Occupational Rights • Demanding Equal Pay • Visions of Working Women
2.6	On Man Man as Husband • as Father • as Member of the Household • at Work • as Responsible for Warfare

2.7 Conclusion

3 BRITAIN'S FICTION

Introduction

The Dark Tide • *Not Without Honour* • *Honourable Estate* • *Account Rendered*
• *Born 1925: A Novel of Youth*

Conclusion

4 BRITAIN'S WAY TO THE TOP

Introduction

Early Ambitions • First Love • Friendship • Second Love • Traditional Marriage •
Semi-detached Marriage and *Ménage à Trois* • Daughter • Motherhood •
Domesticity • The Top • Conclusion

5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

AFTERWORD

APPENDIXES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

INDEX

CONTENT

This study reconstructs Brittain's feminist theory, which mainly refutes assumptions made about women, supports companionate marriage, and demands the communal reorganisation of child care and domestic work to enable a married woman to work outside her home. It compares her theory to her five novels. Doing so, it uncovers revealing feminist 'flaws', above all that marriage remains the sine qua non for a woman's happiness.

*The study describes Brittain's way to the top as a formidable obstacle race, in which she constantly had to fight the men she loved, her children, her parents, and resulting domesticity in order to find time to write "the book of the decade". She reached her goal with the publication of *Testament of Youth* 1933.*

INHALT

Das Buch rekonstruiert Brittain's feministische Theorie, die vor allem Unterstellungen gegen Frauen widerlegt, eine 'kameradschaftliche Ehe' propagiert und die kommunale Reorganisation von Kinderbetreuung und Hausarbeit fordert, um verheirateten Frauen eine Erwerbstätigkeit zu ermöglichen.

Desweiteren wird Brittain's Theorie mit ihren fünf Romanen verglichen. Dabei werden aufschlussreiche feministische 'Mängel' aufgedeckt, insbesondere derjenige, dass die Ehe Grundvoraussetzung für das weibliche Glück bleibt.

*Schließlich wird Brittain's Weg zum Gipfel als ein furchterregender Hindernislauf beschrieben, auf dem sie ständig gegen die geliebten Männer, ihre Kinder, ihre Eltern und die daraus resultierende Hausarbeit ankämpfen musste, um die Zeit zu finden, "das Buch des Jahrzehnts" zu schreiben. Sie erreichte ihr Ziel mit der Veröffentlichung von *Testament of Youth* im Jahre 1933.*