

Theodora Bosanquet

Theodora Bosanquet (1880-1961) was an English writer and editor, notable for her role as amanuensis for Henry James. She was an active member of the Society for Psychical Research and practised automatic writing.

Life and Career

Theodora Bosanquet was born in Sandon on the Isle of Wight on 3 October 1880. She was distantly related to Charles Darwin through her mother's family; her father was the local curate. She was educated at Cheltenham Ladies' College and graduated from University College, London with a BSc. Secretarial skills that she acquired in 1907 were later used in her work as amanuensis to Henry James. Following his death in 1916, Bosanquet carried out war work for the government until 1919, for which she received the MBE. She served as the secretary to the International Federation of University Woman (IFUW) and was appointed director and editor of the political and literary magazine *Time and Tide*, in addition to writing her own articles and books.

She formed a relationship with Lady Margaret Rhondda, and the couple lived together until Rhondda's death in 1958.

Psychical Research

Bosanquet was indirectly linked to psychical research through her professional association with Henry James, whose brother William, a Harvard psychology professor, was a keen supporter of work carried out by the Society for Psychical Research. Bosanquet herself was a longstanding member of the SPR; voted onto its governing council in 1945 she also edited its quarterly journal for several years.

Bosanquet's papers, held in archive at Cambridge University Library, show that she regularly practised automatic writing and meditation, and sat with mediums such as Hester Dowden and Gladys Leonard.^[1] She wrote in the SPR journal that 'There are now many people who possess extra-normal power and who seem to themselves to be in touch with some definite group of discarnate personalities, acting together and more or less responsible for the communications made by automatic writing or clairaudient dictation'.^[2]

Selected Publications

Spectators (1916, with C. Smith). London: Constable.

Henry James at Work (1924). London: The Hogarth Press.

Harriet Martineau: An essay in comprehension (1927). London: The Hogarth Press.

Paul Valery (1933). London: The Hogarth Press.

Literature

Bosanquet, T. (1936). Correspondence: Proxy sittings. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 29, 171.

Endnotes

Footnotes

1. ^ SPR archives.
2. ^ Bosanquet (1936), 171.

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