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Being, Nature of in Antoinette Brown Blackwell (1825–1921)

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In Antoinette Brown Blackwell's philosophy, the nature of Being is designed by God (defined as force, energy, activity) as twofold, matter and force or energy. The entire inorganic universe is "literally a thought scheme—one process definitely and clearly innate in the universe." The initiator of force or process is Absolute Being, producing finite and infinite activity. Matter and energy are persistent. Blackwell insisted on the primacy of energy and the eternal nature of matter. She stressed the nature of both the universe and the individual as being evolving activity and as eternal. An individual is a unit of being individualized by internal correlations. Physics recognizes that nature's "structural on-going modifications" are presented as time, space, force, and law. Law is the "expression, the statement of some fact in nature; it has no life, no activity." Metaphysics studies the nature of Being and is determined by the methods of the nature of Being: balance, cooperation, coordination, and adaptation.

The hypothesis that Blackwell intuited from physics extends the eternal nature of universal matter and energy to individuality. In her *The Philosophy of Individuality or The One and the Many*, Blackwell argued that while individual oneness persists, distinctness remains—heat, light, electricity remain differentiated. No matter the theory, generalization, or classification, dissimilarities remain. All change is a sloughing off the old and an acquiring of the new in which both fundamental energy and individuality abide. "The structure of a living organism" is designed "for continual change" and the "possibility of continual improvement." Unending process is the accumulation of new modes of process. Substances are exchanged in modes. Man, the highest living organism, creates new modes but not new material. In the multi-levels of changing, the cycle of perpetual change in the nature of Being, we also "recognize the unchanging."

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