



Woman's Nature in Antoinette Brown Blackwell (1825–1921)

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Antoinette Brown Blackwell's theory is that, based on scientific evidence, women's nature is not inferior to but equivalent though not identical to men's. Researching the animal kingdom, she found what evolutionists had missed, the complexity of woman's nature. Evolution gives women increasing complexity in both mind and body. Since her mind is more fitted to intuition, that is, perceiving through direct observations of things, she engages in a direct method to truths. Through perception, the mature woman is capable of appreciating the most highly complex fact or the most abstract principle. Blackwell proposed in her essay, "The Trial by Science," that scientific investigative research has been carried out on the representative male body," and so since "the mind works through the body," scientists have arrived at but probability and preconception. In addition, "Psychology based on such physiology can be no more scientific." So, science study needs be focused on the female body to know better the body and mind of woman. Blackwell noted that if the climate is detrimental or nonconductive through bad science, a woman may not be able to see her own powers. While there is no "Adequate Psychology of Women," one power women possess is by inherited habit, is the constitutional power of foregoing self-centeredness in thought and feeling. This means, a woman's mode of thinking and feeling is more differentiated from that of childhood's self-centeredness than is a man's. It is "to Nature interpreted by scientific methods," that we most confidently appeal to discover the nature of woman. "The best text-book is the things itself," and so woman who intuits the thing itself, directly engages with the nature of things. Antoinette Brown Blackwell, being the first woman to forge "an evolutionary feminism," encouraged other women to test her intuitions and create the "science of feminine humanity."

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