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Mind-body Identity in Antoinette Brown Blackwell (1825–1921)

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Antoinette Brown Blackwell defined mind as “The correlation of intrinsic Being and its intensive processes.” Process is defined as “The provisional process of all processes, actual or possible.” “Mind-body” or “mind and matter,” is a unit of Being, a unit of individuality, that Blackwell called a *soma*. A *soma* is something like an Anne Conway monad. Its individualizing internal correlations are ever evolving as individual consciousness. Consciousness is given an underlying reality and immutability in its mutual dependence of mind and its organism. Deepest consciousness, an abiding oneness, “underlies all modes of the ever changing sensibility.” “Modes of sensibility are modes of power” limited to humankind whose innate “correlations individualize us” and our “modifications, material and mental.” The “essential nature of power.” is “ultimate in every change.” Consciousness cannot be separated from physical properties. Every living, sentient atom “is indivisible and indestructible.” So, a unit, composed of “two sets of energies,” sentient and physical, together form the immutable basis of immortal existence.” The indestructibility of body must mean the indestructibility of mind. This means immortality must have a physical basis in eternal process and method of evolution. Human life requires cooperation of mind and body in change, meaning abiding energy, and individuality. In that each atom, an “embodied adaptation,” is to itself the center of the universe, to co-work with any other, means there is a substance exchange through modes or ways of thinking. In change and communication, “Consciousness works through” and “controls the energies,” e.g. the pen in the hand, the ink from the pen, as much as “hand or brain.” It works with its physical properties and gives value to existence. The Creator, the “Infinite Thinker” of the universe, began eternal process. The mind-body or *soma* continues the process by creating new modes but not new material.

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Keywords:

consciousness, immortality, individual, mind-body, mode, physical, power, process, sentient, soma, Anne Conway