

Once in a Republic Can It Be Proved That Science Has No Sex: Marie Elizabeth Zakrzewska (1829-1902) and the Multiple Meanings of Science in the Nineteenth.

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"Once in a Republic Can It Be Proved That Science Has No Sex": Marie Elizabeth Zakrzewska (1829-1902) and the Multiple Meanings of Science in the Nineteenth-Century United States

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Abstract

This article looks at the life and work of Marie Elizabeth Zakrzewska, one of the most prominent female physicians in the nineteenth-century United States. She is best known among historians of medicine as an

advocate of science and a critic of sentimentality at a time when most women argued that their sentimental nature legitimized their entry into the medical field. Born in Berlin in 1829, Zakrzewska received her M.D. in 1856 from Western Reserve College in Cleveland, Ohio. Six years later, she founded the New England Hospital for Women and Children in Boston, one of a handful of all-female institutions that offered clinical training to women. To understand the roots of Zakrzewska's unusual stance on science and sentimentality, this article argues for the necessity of abandoning a dichotomy scholars often have created between femininity, subjectivity, and morality, on the one hand, and masculinity, objectivity, and science, on the other.

"ONLY IN A REPUBLIC CAN IT BE PROVED THAT SCIENCE HAS NO SEX"¹:

Marie Elizabeth Zakrzewska (1829–1902) and the Multiple Meanings of Science in the Nineteenth-Century United States

Arleen Marcia Tuchman

This article looks at the life and work of Marie Elizabeth Zakrzewska, one of the most prominent female physicians in the nineteenth-century United States. She is best known among historians of medicine as an advocate of science and a critic of sentimentality at a time when most women argued that their sentimental nature legitimized their entry into the medical field. Born in Berlin in 1829, Zakrzewska received her M.D. in 1856 from Western Reserve College in Cleveland, Ohio. Six years later, she founded the New England Hospital for Women and Children in Boston, one of a handful of all-female institutions that offered clinical training to women. To understand the roots of Zakrzewska's unusual stance on science and sentimentality, this article argues for the necessity of abandoning a dichotomy scholars often have created between femininity, subjectivity, and morality, on the one hand, and masculinity, objectivity, and science, on the other.

On 2 November 1859, at the start of the school year at the New England Female Medical College in Boston, Massachusetts, newly appointed professor Marie Elizabeth Zakrzewska gave the opening address. Speaking to friends of the college, physicians, students, and other faculty members, she centered her talk around the question of what should be expected from a physician. First and foremost, she emphasized, a person must have the proper motives for studying medicine, and these, she insisted, could be only "an inborn taste and talent for the practice of medicine," as well as "an earnest desire and love of scientific investigations." Zakrzewska contrasted these objectives with those of a large number of women, who, in her view, entered the medical field for no other reason than "to step out of daily domestic life" or to satisfy ambition. "To these two different classes of women," she went on,

I must add a third, which belongs in part to both those already mentioned, but which is impregnated besides with a perpetual

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