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Robert Boyle and the Masculine Methods of Science

Sargent, Rose-Mary (2002) *Robert Boyle and the Masculine Methods of Science*. [Preprint]



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Abstract

In her recent case study, Elizabeth Potter attempts to show how Boyles experimental method was biased by gender considerations. Part of her argument focuses on the combination of the "invisibility" of women in Boyle's published work together with his unpublished comments on female chastity, and part concerns Boyles rejection of the animistic explanation of his air pump experiments by Francis Line. I argue that the historical and biographical elements of the case make Potter's arguments questionable. In addition, I address whether and how such historical cases can shed light on current debates about gender issues and argue that Boyles methodological writings could be used to better advantage in the feminist cause.

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