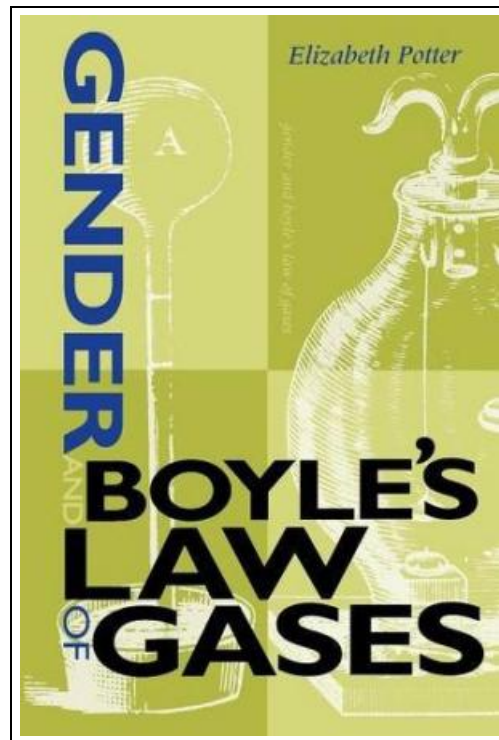


Gender and Boyle's Law of Gases



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GENDER AND BOYLE'S LAW OF GASES



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Indiana. 1 Paperback(s), 2001. soft. Book Condition: New. Though we tend to think of science as purely objective, based on demonstrable proofs and phenomena, scientists are of course human, and subject to certain assumptions and prejudices. A professor of women's studies and the co-editor of *Feminist Epistemologies*, Elizabeth Potter looks at Boyle's Law, published in England in 1662, which describes the relation between the pressure and volume of a gas. She argues that the Gas Law, while certainly based on physical evidence, was also shaped by Robert Boyle's views on class and gender in a time of political upheaval and scientific uncertainty. Potter then weighs in on whether such biases invalidate the value of the science."Gender and Boyle's Law of Gases is about more than its title implies: not only does Potter engage in the continuing dialogue about if and how gender might affect the practice of science, but she also goes beyond gender and enters the contemporary discussion about the social dimension of science. Accordingly, most of the book is devoted to a review of the history of the English Civil War and Revolution, the radical social and political groups that were active at that time (Levellers, sectaries), and to a discussion of the religious and social meaning of hylozoism (an early Greek philosophy that states that all matter has life) in the 17th century. Potter argues for a compromise position between those who would insist that Boyle's science was derived entirely from experimental and observational evidence, and those who believe that his ideas about gender and his total rejection of hylozoism (because of its radical political implications) influenced the science that led to the Gas Law. Her argument is that although Boyle's work is not free of contextual values, he produced good science and hence good science can...



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