

PHILOSOPHY

THE SELF EVIDENT?

14.11.2023

The Wikipedia summarizes the "[Leviathan and the air pump](#)" book by Schaffer & Shapin

Their aim is to use a historical account of the debate over the validity of Boyle's air pump experiments, and by extension his [experimental method](#), to discover the origins of the credibility that we give experimentally produced facts today. The authors wish to avoid 'The self-evident' method, which (they explain) is when historians project the values of their current culture onto the time period that they are studying (in this case valuing the benefits of [empiricism](#)). They wish to take a "stranger's" viewpoint when examining the debate between Hobbes and Boyle because, in the 1660s, both methods of knowledge production were well respected in the academic community.

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