

that underpins the *Historia*; against this backdrop, the Irish, English, and Britons function in Bede's narrative as ideal types, at least in part, showing the reader different ways ethnic groups could engage with the universal Church. All this should hardly surprise anyone who has seriously studied Bede in recent generations. Foley adds to this general view two particular insights of great worth, I think. First, he notes that the *Historia* consistently, if subtly, links Christian universalism to a repeated valorization of consensus, harmony, and community, contrasting it with selfishness and squabbling. In other words, although Foley does not bring it out in these terms, Bede seems to have made the case for universalism as a social, as well as a theological, virtue. Second, the lens of "race" that Foley brings to the investigation enables him to recognize that Bede was open to acknowledging the moral ambivalence and human contradictions of his English characters in a way that he struggled to do for his British or Irish characters. This was, Foley posits, because Bede was blind to Englishness in much the way that white supremacy is blind to whiteness—the monk of Jarrow simply did not present members of the *gens Anglorum* in the same racialized way as he depicted Britons.

The focus on "race" does not always work this well: trying to understand Bede's presentation of Christian universalism in terms of a "Latin race," as chapter 2 does, strikes me as unhelpful. More significantly, I feel that Foley could have got so much more from his excellent close readings of the *Historia* if he had not limited the book to being a somewhat odd thought experiment designed to determine whether Bede was partially responsible for nineteenth-century English racism. At the end of the day, as a medieval historian, I do not think that is a very important, or even interesting, question to ask. But Foley makes a substantial contribution to our understanding of the *Historia* in his conclusion by pointing out the co-existence of two voices in Bede's most famous work, "the more esoteric [of which] does not merely tone down the dominant voice's racism: it actually works to undercut it" (203). Perhaps more persuasively in a footnote he speaks of "a thoroughly ambivalent voice" in the *Historia* (202). As Foley himself recognizes, this argument opens up fascinating and important questions about Bede's purposes in writing the *Historia*, his audience, his context, and possibly even the values he lived by.

Foley's thought-provoking book provides triumphant proof of the virtues of close, sympathetic reading of an early medieval text, but it also suggests that if we really want to understand Bede's role in the beginnings of English racism then we need to study him in context.

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Kristin M. Girten and Aaron R. Hanlon, eds. *British Literature and Technology, 1600–1830*

Aperçus: Histories Texts Cultures. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2022. Pp. 214. \$34.95 (paper).

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British Literature and Technology, 1660–1830 joins a small but growing number of essay collections devoted to exploring the historical connections between literature and the sciences.

What sets this collection apart from others in this area is its emphasis on technology as a distinct subject within the broader field of science studies. By focusing on the convergence of literature and technology at a point in which the latter became a hallmark of civilization's advancement, the volume aims, in the words its editors, to "register the important role writers in different genres played in mediating Enlightenment technologies and progress" while also "help[ing] us expand our appreciation of how tenuous the faith in a progressive Enlightenment narrative could be" (7). Accordingly, many of the essays collected here offer counternarratives to the conventional view of the long eighteenth century as a period that celebrated technological innovation as a marker of social progress. Moreover—and, in my view, more strikingly—when taken together they also reveal the extent to which Enlightenment-period writers recognized technology as something that was socially mediated, and which could thus be made to do social and political work in addition to its other practical functions.

The collection's eight essays are arranged chronologically, with the bulk of the volume focusing on eighteenth-century prose. While the novel certainly receives attention—particularly in structural terms, in line with the volume's focus on machines and mechanics—equal consideration is given over to less-studied genres and texts, including alongside fictional works industrial patents, political statutes, and object inventories. This is one of the volume's strengths; as an interdisciplinary study, it has as much to say about the aesthetic value of technology as it does about the technological aspects of literature. Kevin McDonnell's inventive study of the parallels between William Hogarth's aesthetic theory of the "S-curve" and James Watt's patented steam engine "linkage" is perhaps the most obvious example of this approach and its fruitfulness. We also see it, however, in Emily West's beautifully nuanced study of Horace Walpole's "gothic lanthorn," which West reads as a "technology of queer time," a revisionist object that deconstructs Enlightenment narratives of genealogical and technological progress while also offering us a model for how we might repurpose pieces of the past to illuminate new and different futures (101). While focused more on the operators than on the technology itself, Zachary Mann's essay, "Gulliver's Travels, Automation, and the Reckoning Author," fits into this category as well. Reading Swift's crank-operated, randomized text-production machine alongside similar innovations within England's textile industry, Mann provides a thought-provoking historical study of "the methods by which the figure of the author or inventor is separated, conceptually, from more mechanical aspects of intellectual labor," with relevance to contemporary debates over copyright and intellectual property, as well as those involving artificial intelligence and automatic text production technologies (63).

Other entries in the collection consider the productive *failure* of technology, or how it might be put to uses other than that for which it was intended. Erik Johnson's essay on time-telling in the fiction of Mary Hearne and Daniel Defoe considers how these writers used the new form of the novel—a genre often characterized by its "insistence on the time process"—to subvert a modern, Lockean understanding of time as something "subjectively experienced but retrospectively universalizable" by repeatedly calling attention to the failure of time-telling technologies in their works (32). As an exploration of the novel's forms, Johnson's argument resonates with McDonnell's reading of *Tristram Shandy's* Shandy-Hall as a failed Hogarthian machine, which ironically works by failing to work, much like the structure of the novel itself. But as an exploration of how our experience of technology can be gendered—as it is in Hearne's novels—Johnson's essay also resonates in interesting and unexpected ways with Thomas Oldham's chapter which follows it and considers the theatrical representation of the (failed) technology of the virginity test in the play *Three Hours After Marriage* (1717), in which Oldham explores how technological advances in obstetrics led to the reduction of women's agency, not only within the birthing chamber but also within the "marital marketplace" and within Britain's patriarchal inheritance structure more broadly (50). The volume's closing entry, Jamison Kantor's study of the metaphor of the state-as-machine in two of Percy Shelley's late poems, leverages the idea of technology's


failure as a means of advancing a political theory of what he refers to as the “postliberal,” a late stage of governance in which the technology of the state becomes separated from the people “over whom it is supposed to preside” (141).

As suggested by the groupings outlined above, taken together, the volume’s individual chapters do speak to each other on the subjects of aesthetics, form, and philosophy, and the Introduction and Afterword both work toward creating a sense of coherence by drawing connections between and across chapters. Nevertheless, if the volume has a weakness, it is that the generic diversity and methodological open-endedness of its organizing principles make some chapters fit together more naturally than others. As the sole chapter focusing on a seventeenth-century work, and one of only two that look at drama, Laura Francis’ bright and innovative reading of the *Duchess of Malfi* (1612) as a “particularly baroque testing ground” for the new technologies of the period feels like it would be better placed in a study of early modern science (16). Additionally, Deven Parker’s straightforwardly historicist reading of Maria Edgeworth’s “Lame Jervas” as a nationalistic defense of “Britain’s imperial stability and technological superiority at a time when neither was certain” feels somewhat out of place among the more theory-oriented chapters that surround it but would fit well into a study of technology’s role in the history of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century nationalism (124). But this criticism is as much as anything an indication that there is more work to be done in the area; as an early entry in the field, *British Literature and Technology, 1660–1830* has much to offer readers interested in the social history of technology and in literature and science studies more broadly.

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Anne, Lady Halkett; Suzanne Trill, ed. *A True Account of My Life and Selected Meditations*

The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: The Toronto Series, 87. Toronto: Iter Press, 2022. Pp. 408. \$69.95 (cloth).

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Anne, Lady Halkett, played an important role in key episodes in the British Civil Wars, or War of Three Kingdoms, in the mid-seventeenth century. Suzanne Trill suggests that Halkett was a “she-intelligencer,” or royalist spy (24). The most famous of her covert activities was her involvement in the escape of Prince James (later James II) in 1648, and Halkett’s autobiographical description of this episode has been much reproduced in anthologies. Beyond this, Lady Halkett remains little known to the wider public. This edition aims to bring Lady Halkett’s dramatic memoir and insightful meditations to the attention of a larger audience. Trill edits Halkett’s *True Account of My Life* directly from the manuscript of this texts held by the British Library (Additional MS 32376). Trill also includes in this edition forty-four of Halkett’s meditations reproduced from manuscripts held in the National Library of Scotland (MSS 6489–6502). Halkett’s meditations provide additional autobiographical reflections and important insights into Halkett’s spiritual practices, experiences, and