

Contents

Introduction	1
I. The Definition of Feedback	2
1. An Example: James Watt's Centrifugal Governor	2
2. The Block Diagram	4
3. Criteria for the Identification of Feedback Control Systems	6
Part One: Antiquity, Middle Ages, and Renaissance	9
II. Feedback Control in Hellenistic Technology	11
1. Ktesibios	11
2. The Oil Lamp of Philon of Byzantium	16
3. Heron of Alexandria	19
4. Ancient Feedback Devices: Summary	25
III. Float Valve Regulators in the Tradition of Ancient Water Clocks	27
1. The Clock of Gaza	28
2. The Clock of Pseudo-Archimedes	28
3. Al-Jazarī	32
4. Riḍwān al-Khurasānī, called Ibn al-Sā'ātī	35
5. Subsequent Fate of the Water Clocks	38

IV. Float Valves in the Tradition of Heron's <i>Pneumatica</i>	40
1. The Banū Mūsā	40
a) Float Valve Regulators	42
b) On-Off Control	44
c) The Principle of Philon's Oil Lamp	44
2. Heron's <i>Pneumatica</i> after the Banū Mūsā	46
V. Automatic Control in Ancient China	49
1. The South-Pointing Chariot	49
2. The Drinking-Straw Regulator	50
3. Float Valve Regulators	51
Part Two: Modern Times after 1600	53
VI. Temperature Regulators	55
1. The Thermostatic Furnaces of Cornelis Drebbel	55
2. Further Temperature Regulators in the 17th Century: Schwenter, Hooke, Becher	65
3. Réaumur and the Prince de Conti	67
4. William Henry's "Sentinel Register"	69
5. Bonnemain	70
VII. Float Valve Regulators	76
1. The Reappearance of Float Valve Regulators in the 18th Century	76
2. James Brindley	77
3. I. I. Polzunov	77
4. Sutton Thomas Wood	78
5. Final Acceptance as a Component of Steam Boilers	79
VIII. Pressure Regulators	82
1. The Safety Valve of Papin	82
2. Robert Delap	83
3. Matthew Murray	86
4. Boulton & Watt	87
IX. Feedback Control on Mills	90
1. The Mill-Hopper	90
2. The Fan-Tail	93
3. Self-regulating Windmill Sails	95
4. Sensing the Speed of Rotation	99
a) Centrifugal Fan with Baffle	99
b) Centrifugal Pendulums	100
5. Speed Regulation	102
a) Mead's Regulator	102

b) Hooper's Regulator	106
6. The Millwrights: Summary	107
X. The Speed Regulation of the Steam Engine	109
1. James Watt's Centrifugal Governor	109
2. The Spread of the Centrifugal Governor	113
3. The Regulator of the Brothers Périer	115
XI. The <i>Pendule Sympathique</i> of Abraham-Louis Breguet	119
XII. Concluding Remarks	125
1. Completeness	125
2. The Rise during the 18th Century	127
3. The General Concept of the Closed Feedback Loop	129
4. Subsequent Developments	131
Notes	133
Picture Credits	147
Index	149