

Book Reviews

JAMES JOYCE, *My impossible health, or the case of James Joyce, catalogue of an exhibition*, London, Royal College of Physicians, 1977, pp. v, 35, [no price stated].

With so much narrow medical specialization it is refreshing to review this catalogue of an exhibition inter-relating aspects of literature, medicine, and history. It tastefully depicts the tribulations of a frustrated Dublin medical student, James Joyce (1882–1941), who, in spite of his “impossible health”, became one of the foremost creative writers of his times. Joyce stoically endured nine eye operations: he also had rheumatic fever, arthritis, urethritis, and an inclination to alcoholism. Retrospectively the most likely diagnosis seems to be Reiter’s syndrome or ankylosing spondylitis.

What did Joyce think of his doctors? He got on well with physicians and surgeons, but referred to psycho-analysis as a form of “blackmail”, and irreverently regarded Jung as the “Swiss Tweedledum” with Freud as the “Viennese Tweedledee”.

Denis Cole and other contributors to this fascinating catalogue and exhibition have rendered a service by opening up a new field of great and wide interest.

JOHN F. KASSON, *Civilizing the machine. Technology and Republican values in America, 1776–1900*, New York, Grossman (Viking Press), 1976, 8vo, pp. xiv, 274, illus., \$15.00.

In nineteenth-century America there were two opposing vital forces, industrialization and cultural development. As a result of their integration, “the improbable marriage of romantic aspiration and industrial ambition”, the author claims that the nation defined itself. He assembles a great deal of varied evidence in his support and the result is an important contribution to social, cultural, and intellectual history.

The evolution of any country’s cultural response to technology is a fascinating story, but that of America is of especial interest, being deeply concerned with an understanding of the whole republican experiment. The historical concept of the latter has recently altered, and it is now thought to be central to the whole American civilization, rather than only a political or intellectual entity. It is the aim of this book to discuss the problem of the meaning of technology for a republican civilization, the way in which technological development and republican values have shaped one another, and the failure to achieve a technological society consonant with republican ideals.

Medical technology was not much in evidence before 1900 so it is not part of the story. It might be interesting, however, to examine it in more recent times with the author’s tenets in mind.

NATHAN ROSENBERG, *Perspectives on technology*, Cambridge University Press, 1976, 8vo, pp. x, 353, £11.50.

The author is an economist and a leading historian of American technological development, so that his book, therefore, deals primarily with the role played by technological change in economic growth. The fifteen essays that depict this are interdisciplinary in as much as they deal with historical, social, and technological material. This type of study is clearly of great importance and just as significant, or perhaps more so, as research into each topic alone. They have all appeared elsewhere