

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

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(1960–1970), but it is convenient to have them gathered together. The author divides them into: ‘Some origins of American technology’; ‘The generation of new technologies’; ‘Diffusion and adaptation of technology’; ‘Natural resources, environment and the growth of knowledge’. Many of them contain historical material but others concern only modern problems. They are all of importance and each is a scholarly production. They will be of interest to a wide range of readers interested in the social impact of technological advancement, and can be warmly recommended to them.

GERT PREISER, *Allgemeine Krankheitsbezeichnungen im Corpus Hippocraticum*, Berlin and New York, W. de Gruyter, 1976, pp. xix, 138, DM. 86.

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The early writings in the Hippocratic Corpus employ a variety of terms for disease, and scholars from Roman times on have tried to explain the different usages, especially of the words *nousos* and *nousema*. An anonymous student of the second century A.D. distinguished them as afflictions of the whole and part of the body respectively; and more recently Fridolf Kudlien has defined *nousos* as a general term for disease and *nousema* as the particular for a disease with an internal cause. Now in this careful study, Gert Preiser returns to the opinion of Galen that there is overall no essential distinction between them, although occasionally, in particular contexts, they are used with specific meanings to give greater clarity. But these meanings are not fixed, and, even within the same tract, the author may not be wholly consistent.

Preiser has perhaps more sympathy with those modern philologists who define *nousos* as illness and *nousema* as the state of being ill, and he suggests that by comparison with words similarly formed in *-ma nousema* indicates the result of the onset of disease. The word itself would be a new coinage of the early or mid-fifth century B.C. (rather early, I think, to be called “sophistic”), possibly invented to describe disease without the demonological connotations of *nousos*; the author of *On the sacred disease (nousos)* is at pains to stress that it is not sacred and merely one of the many ailments (*nousemata*) which afflict mankind. But the new word did not drive out the old, and the subtle ontological distinction between the disease itself and the result of the onset of a disease was never consciously formulated in Greek—the abundance of overlapping synonyms for disease in both Greek and English cannot produce the precise clarity of German with its preference for word-formations from a single root. It may also be doubted whether *nousos* carried as many overtones as the literary and poetic parallels collected by Preiser suggest—as he himself knows, stylistic fashion, a desire for elegant variation, and an exuberant delight in new coinages are equally important. As Wilamowitz pointed out fifty years ago, there is a constant striving among the Hippocratic writers for variation by means of synonyms; and there is a fixed terminology only for strictly medical phenomena.

Preiser’s negative conclusions are valuable, if only as a check on too broad generalizations, but, expanded in a beautifully printed book, with all quotations in Greek and in German, they are endowed with an importance and a price that they do not warrant. A long article or publication as an Academy *Abhandlung* would have drawn