

with the variety of interpretation given by adherents of differing schools of psychopathology. She thinks that in the proper use of art therapy it is essential to pay more attention to the patients' interpretation of their own symbolic creations rather than to interpret for them.

The book is beautifully produced, with an abundance of illustrations, many of them in colour, to go with the text. It will be of value to those engaged in the field of psychotherapy, and to many others who have an interest in psychopathology and in the nature of creative art.

W. S. MACLAY.

Wisdom, Madness and Folly. The Philosophy of a Lunatic. By JOHN CUSTANCE.
London: Gollancz, 1951. Pp. 254. Price 16s.

Mr. Custance, who is now in his early fifties, had had half-a-score sharp attacks of simple mania and acute melancholia since his thirties. He is a man of education, who has read widely in the fields of psychology and philosophy, and who has the individualism, humanity and sensitivity that are so often part of the cyclothymic personality. He writes well and he writes clearly, even though much of his book was written when he was emerging from hypomanic phases.

Unlike some sufferers he has not sought to forget his illnesses, nor has he brooded on them as tragic and wasteful interludes. Instead, he has gloried in the opportunity to examine the unconscious content of his mind, and the relationship of his psychotic phenomena to real events. He has formulated a philosophical "Theory of Actuality," which emphasizes the "reality" of hallucinations and delusions, and leads him to state that the inner experiences of psychotics are different from those of mystics, leaders and prophets only because the latter have the spiritual and intellectual capacities to comprehend and make use of their experiences.

Although the author would certainly assess his theory as the most important part of his book, psychiatrists will value other parts more highly. The clinical descriptions of his manic and depressed states of mind are sensitive and revealing, but even more valuable are his accounts of how and why he reacted emotionally to enforced hospitalization; after reading these there will be few hospital psychiatrists who will not have gained deeper insight into the minds of their patients. Mr. Custance freely admits that when he was manic he must have been a difficult patient; even so he was unlucky in some of the hospitals, doctors and nurses he encountered, and it is sad that he still feels great resentment over the certification procedure he underwent. He makes many practical suggestions for the better organization of mental hospitals, but most of his ideas are already being followed in progressive hospitals.

HUNTER GILLIES.

The Electrical Activity of the Nervous System. By MARY A. B. BRAZIER.
London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1951. Pp. 220. Price 25s.

The book is intended for students, and covers the field adequately though not exhaustively. It first surveys the electrical changes observed in the axon when an impulse passes, and then proceeds through related topics such as the excitability of nerve, the propagation of the nerve impulse, transmission at synapses, the electrical responses to the stimulation of sense organs, and the cortical responses to peripheral stimulation; finally the author gives a survey of the normal and abnormal electroencephalograms of man.

The descriptions of the various types of electrical activity are well integrated so that the relations can be clearly seen. At all points where further discussion would become too detailed, a well-selected bibliography shows the student where further information is to be found.

No other book presents the same information on this important subject. Dr. Brazier's book can be confidently recommended to those who require an accurate and readable account.

W. ROSS ASHBY.

Principles of General Psychopathology. By SIEGFRIED FISCHER, M.D. New York: Philosophical Library, 1950. Pp. 327. Price \$4.75.

Having devoted nearly two-thirds of his book to describing and classifying isolated concepts of normal psychology and related symptoms of psychopathology, the author says, "This kind of psychology has been called the 'psychology without soul.' It does not satisfy our desire and ambition to understand people, and to gain a close insight into their behaviour."