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**A Portrait of Isaac Newton.** *Frank E. Manuel.* The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1968. xvi+478 p. \$11.95.

L. T. More's biography of Sir Isaac Newton appeared in 1934; the years intervening have seen the publication and analysis of much new Newton material. While the edition of Sir Isaac's correspondence sponsored by the Royal Society, and Whiteside's monumental eight-volume edition of Newton's mathematical papers are still-continuing projects, other works have appeared, edited by A. R. and M. B. Hall and by I. B. Cohen. The great Alexandre Koyré has shown us, in his *Newtonian Studies* and elsewhere, what Newtonian scholarship requires. Richard S. Westfall and P. M. Rattansi, among others, are guiding us in Newtonian interpretation. Obviously the time is nearly ripe for a new biography of Newton, which, it would be hoped, by taking account of some of this vast reservoir of scholarly material, would expand our understanding both of the man and of his works. Unfortunately, Manuel's study is not that biography.

Manuel has chosen, instead, to create for us a psychoanalytical portrait, in which Newton is presented almost as a case study of a man who is the victim of a mother-fixation. What insights Manuel provides are couched in the terms of psychoanalysis. After Newton's death, those who inventoried his London chambers described the furnishings as being chiefly red; Manuel explains the predominance of that color as resulting partly from Newton's "bloody fantasies," and partly from his aspirations to "aristocratic status." The falling of an apple in a garden became for Newton an insightful occurrence, because Newton in some way connected the apple and the garden with the Eden in which he dwelt imaginatively with his mother. Newton pursued experiments which involved much use of his eyes, because such usage recalled for him that

joyous infantile moment when, through ocular contact, he was reunited with his mother after a long absence. These interpretive examples, taken from the many that could have been chosen, are the substance of Manuel's biography. No one would deny that Newton was an extraordinary man; we expect that extraordinariness of this magnitude cannot be restricted solely to the man's scientific work, and that not all of its manifestations would be pleasing, or even useful. Manuel's biography, however, creates an impression, not of a living genius, but of a monster. He has not made us understand truly why it was that Newton was so important to his scientific community (except for his perversity, his tenacity, and his deep-seated psychological problems), nor why the importance of his work persisted long after his death.

Yet one cannot be too hasty and entirely dismiss Manuel's *Newton*, for the book does contain genuine achievements. The argument between Flamsteed and Newton is detailed in a fascinating way; the description of the complex relationship between Newton and Fatio contains material that is almost completely new. The Newton-Leibniz controversy has been less well served, doubtless because a full treatment requires scientific interpretation as well as an understanding of the personalities. This is, in a sense, our final disappointment. We want to read about Newton because he was a very great scientist, and it is precisely this aspect which Manuel has ignored. For a biography of Sir Isaac Newton that will be outstanding for our time, we must still wait.

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