PRIMER NÚMERO

Lo femenino

THE IMITATION GAME:
HYSTERIA AND THE DISCOURSE OF TECHNO-SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

This paper intends to review the mutual benefit between the media and psychoanalysis. It argues that psychoanalysis needs increasingly recognize its effectiveness as a theory of the media in its discussion on contemporary forms of social bonds whose effects are manifested in the clinic. Also it suggests that both Turing and Lacan, in its different forms, established that thought is an effect of symbolization that does not necessarily require a human brain.

KEY WORDS

Psychoanalysis | Mass media | imitation game | Femininity | Masculinity

PSYCHOANALYSIS AS MEDIA THEORY

Practically determining 'that which is feminine' - along with 'that which is masculine', and even 'that which is human' - has become an increasing concern in an age dominated by networked computers and the world of social media. This is a world of catfishing, virtual transvestitism, sexual grooming and the increasing use of robot online personae using fake profiles with convincing backgrounds and histories to infiltrate social networks for the purpose of spying, propaganda and intimate advertising and marketing. Online, the world of *Bladerunner* (Ridley Scott, 1982) is already here and the question of that which is or isn't feminine has become intimately bound to that which is - or was - human.

All of this was anticipated by Alan Turing at the very dawn of the computer age. Turing's work founded the modern computer, the essential ingredients for machine intelligence and artificial life. Turing was of course the subject of the recent film *The Imitation Game* (Graham Moore, 2014) starring Benedict Cumberbatch that tells the story of how Turing lead the team that decoded the German encryption device 'Enigma' at Bletchley Park in England during World War Two. The title of the film refers to his essay 'Computing Machinery and Intelligence' (1950) in which he outlines the famous 'imitation game' or 'Turing test' for answering the question of whether or not machines can be said to think. Turing prefaces this test with a similar one concerning the problem of distinguishing 'that which is feminine'.

> The 'imitation game' is introduced as a game 'played with three people, a man (A), a woman (B), and an interrogator (C) who may be of either sex. The interrogator stays in a room apart from the other two. The object of the game is for the interrogator to determine which of the other two is the man and which is the woman. (Copeland, 2004: 441).

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The interrogator knows them by different labels, say 'X' and 'Y', and poses various questions to them. In order to hide factors such as tone of voice and so on, their answers must be in writing, 'or better still typewritten'. The sample questions concern the usual conventions of gender difference in the 1940s and 50s in Europe such as 'please tell me the length of your hair'. Since the object of the game is for (A) to try and make (C) fail to determine that which is feminine, he can give answers such as 'My hair is shingled, and the longest strands are about nine inches long'. (441). The point of the example is to demonstrate that under these conditions, it is of course impossible to tell which is the man and which is the woman. Turing then goes on to describe a similar process in which he hopes to show that it is - or soon will be - just as impossible to tell the difference between machines and men and women assuming the former are equipped with enough information about signifiers of gender, say, and sufficient processing speed and power. 'What will happen', writes Turing, 'when a machine takes the part of A in this game? Will the interrogator decide wrongly as often when the game is played like this as he does when the game is played between a man and a woman?' (441) The answer of course is yes.

It is interesting that the two questions posed by Turing in the imitation game are the very same questions that Lacan says are central to the structure of hysteria and obsessional neurosis, the structures that are generally associated with femininity in the former case, and masculinity in the latter. In *Seminar III* Lacan states that for the hysteric 'everything that's said, expressed, gestured, manifested, assumes its sense only as a function of a response that has to be formulated concerning the fundamentally symbolic relation - *Am I a man or am I a woman*? (Lacan, 1993: 171.) Similarly, the question 'can a machine think' or 'can a machine be mistaken for a man?' amounts to asking if it is alive or dead. This is the existential question that is central to the obsessional who has indeed reduced his being to the thoughts that afflicts him. These thoughts continually concern 'the question of death [that is] another mode of the neurotic creation of the question - its obsessional mode' (Lacan, 1993: 179-80). These thoughts, for Dominique Miller, constitute the 'automatism' of the 'thinking machine' that is the obsessional. (See Miller, 2005)

In this short essay I want to argue for the mutually beneficial study of media and psychoanalysis. 'You are now' announced Lacan to his students in 1973, 'infinitely more than you think, subjects of instruments that, from the microscope right down to the radiotelevision, are becoming the elements of your existence. You cannot currently even gauge the import of this, but it is nonetheless part of scientific discourse, insofar as a discourse is what determines a social link' (Lacan, 1999: 82). Psychoanalysis, I argue, needs increasingly to acknowledge its efficacy as a media theory in its negotiation of contemporary forms of social bond whose effects are manifested in the clinic.

As early as *Seminar II*, Lacan is keenly aware of this, suggesting that 'in so far as he speaks, the subject can perfectly well find his answer, his return, his secret, his mystery, in the constructed symbol which modern machines represent for us' (Lacan, 1988: 186). That is to say, the *parlêtre* that we acknowledge today as the metaphor for the Freudian unconscious, is also always a more generally *médiêtre*. We are not just speaking bodies, but mediated beings who in the computer age might also be designated as *technobodies* to indicate that the body is hollowed-out and cadaverized. While its images are simulated and displaced among a variety of screens, objects and gadgets that displace identity across a 'nobody' or a central void, its fleshly surface enjoys and suffers from processes of machined thought from which it is separated.

The emergence of the modern computer takes place at a moment in the twentieth century when media systems had already changed our understanding of the arbitrary nature of gender signification. Freud was one of the first to take note of this. In his seminal work *Discourse Networks 1800/1900* (1991), Friedrich Kittler argues that both Freud and Lacan were great media theorists as well as cryptanalysts because they recognized the central importance of new systems of communications. For example, it was the appearance of the typewriter, argues Kittler, that first made manifest the fact that language is a symbolic system, and not something simply given in nature. The typewriter can thus be regarded as the 'technical *a priori*' for those Freudian case studies that 'demonstrate that the romanticism of the soul has yielded to the materialism

of written signs' (Kittler, 1991: 283.) Indeed, in his 'Notes Upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis' (1909) also known as the case study of the 'Rat Man', Freud argues that 'the obsessional command (or whatever it may be) … is known only, in waking life, in a truncated or distorted form, like a mutilated telegraph message.' (Freud, 1993: 60) Type emphasizes that letters are the a-natural keys to the unconscious, knowledge of which is hinted at in typographic errors betraying the jouissance of language in the presence of bodies - in particular female bodies. This is because the role of 'steno-typist' quickly became one of the main types of female employment and autonomy. The speed and mechanical efficiency of the female shorthand typist replaced the laborious handwriting of the male bureaucrat and manager who could now simply 'dictate' in person or via a dictaphone. In his essay 'Dracula's Legacy', Kittler writes 'if the great word emancipation has any historical meaning, it is only in the area of word processing, which continues to employ more women world-wide than any other field' (Kittler, 1997: 64). In an essay exploring the implications for female workers of this change in labour and gender relations brought about by the semiotics of the typewriter, Katherine Biers (2015) suggests that the increasing presence in the workplace of female bodies, contributed to the de-idealization of women, even as it consigned women to a highly mechanized and over-sexualized world of office work.

Colette Soler makes a similar point in her essay 'Hysteria in Scientific Discourse' (2002), when she remarks that the rise of techno-science has resulted in the 'universalization' of a subject that, while it may be gendered, 'knows nothing of sexual difference', and instead promotes 'unisex' that 'consequently adapts very easily to the reduction of every subject to universal worker' whose satisfactions may only be met by the goods, symbols and gadgets of commodifiable - that is to say phallic - jouissance. 'Unisex means the phallic jouissance that is available to everyone' (Soler, 2002: 49). For Soler, it is the female hysteric who is uncertainly located as both the symptom of this process and its signifier of (phallic) resistance.

This is nicely illustrated by the emergence of the *femme fatale* in the Hollywood *noir* tradition of the 1930s and 40s, as Biers shows. In her essay, Biers reads two texts, Billy Wilder's *Double Indemnity* (1944) and a much earlier play, Sophie Treadwell's *Machinal* (1928), that are based on Ruth Snyder, a typist and stenographer who was executed for murdering her husband. Biers argues that unlike Wilder's film in which the *femme fatale* retains in a negative form 'woman' as both ideal and symptom of man, Treadwell's play draws attention to the stultifying, mechanized conditions of women's labour, suggesting that in the climactic scene, the 'young woman's moaning voice' provides a discordant accompaniment to the 'telegraphic instruments' of the journalists reporting her confession to the murder, 'making it impossible to decide whether the material order outside or the psychic order inside rules over her fate' (Biers, 2015: 149). The woman's voice here however, does not provide the sonorous support for the bureaucratic writing machine, but the jouissance (suffering) of its internal dissonance. For Soler, while 'our scientific civilization and the universalization it promotes engenders unisex', hysterical women 'have inspired psychoanalysis to keep open the question of sex' in order to provide them with a response. (54)

But science and hysteria are not necessarily opposites. As he continued to think about discourse in the 1970s, Lacan seems to have begun to shift his position on science, moving it away from university discourse towards the discourse of the hysteric. 'I conclude', he states in *Television* (1974), 'that scientific discourse and the hysteric's discourse have *almost* the same structure' (1990: 19). By 1975 and 1977 he is stating that scientific discourse and the discourse of the hysteric are identical (*Scilicet* 5, 1975: 7 and *'Propos sur 'hysterie'', Quarto* (1977). This is because unlike university discourse, where the truth of knowledge (S2) is power (S1), the truth of science, as with the hysteric, is the real (a). To look at this identification more closely, and to analyze its implications, requires of course that the (scientific) subject of the unconscious is placed in the position of agency. But here we are not concerned with the subject that has been occluded by science, that is to say sutured by systems of measurement or calculation. Rather, we are concerned with the subject of encryption. It is precisely this distinction that Lacan makes in *Television* between psychoanalytic and scientific method, drawing on the example of Freud. 'What Freud articulates as primary process in the unconscious … isn't something to be numerically expressed

[*se chiffre*], but to be deciphered [*se dechiffre*]. I mean: *jouissance* itself.' (1990: 18-19).

The reference to 'deciphering' of course brings us directly back to Alan Turing, the greatest cryptanalyst of the twentieth century. If we look again at his imitation game, in which he juxtaposes the question of the difference between men and women with that of human and machine, we can see that the point of this juxtaposition is not only to stress the importance of symbolic differences, but also their limit. The juxtaposition acknowledges that it is not just signifiers of difference that are at issue in the question concerning femininity and masculinity, but the jouissance that these signifiers orient. Or as his biographer suggests, Turing's question was meant to imply that sex 'depended on facts which were *not* reducible to sequences of symbols' (Hodges, 2013: 523). These 'facts' of course are not essentially biological; they pertain to the fact that knowledge of sex is not a question of information, but jouissance. Accordingly, Lacan's own re-framing of Turing's question concerns not whether or not a machine can think, but whether it can be said to *know*, because 'the foundation of knowledge is that the jouissance of its exercise is the same as its acquisition' (Lacan, 1999: 97). Turing's imitation game anticipates the distinction made by Lacan in Seminar XX where he emphasizes that his 'formulas of sexuation' do not map on to gender difference. In this essay, then, I want to stress the importance of media theory to psychoanalysis, but also underscore the correlative importance of assessing the subject of media and technology from the psychoanalytic perspective, that is to say from the perspective of the real that resists all scientific observation and measurement.

In so doing it is necessary nevertheless to acknowledge that the particular configurations of signifiers supported by the different types of technical systems that mediate them have had significant effects on the unconscious, and what it means to be feminine or masculine. In what follows I am going to argue that Alan Turing, in spite of the legacy represented by Silicon Valley and the Americanization of digital culture, also attempted to keep open the question of sex both in his research into machine intelligence and artificial life. In so doing he managed to bring into proximity scientific discourse with the discourse of the hysteric in the manner of the true scientist in his attempt to 'formulate the encounter with the real cause' (Fink, 1995: 141).

MEDIA THEORY AS PSYCHOANALYSIS

In Graham Moore's film The *Imitation Game* (2014), there is a touching scene in which the young Turing exchanges encrypted love messages with his school boy beloved Christopher Morecom. The scene suggests that Turing's interest in encryption - which of course culminated in his leading the British decryption of the German Enigma machine - found its basis in the enigma of love and the impossibility of a sexual relation. Impossible not just because of its homosexual character, of course; like the poets of courtly love whose codes and acrostics emptied the object of their passion of all substance, turning her into the signifier of an 'inhuman partner' (Lacan, 1992: 150), so for Turing mathematics and machines became the focus of his Eros. Alan Hodges's biography, upon which the film is based, reports Turing 'once saying that he derived a sexual pleasure from mathematics' (2014: 161). No doubt, this Eros was also at the root of his 'obsession' with producing machine intelligence and artificial life in seminal essays that laid the foundations for research into both areas. Moore's film picks up on the correlation by having Turing name the Automatic Computing Engine he was building in Manchester University in the early 1950s, 'Christopher' after his boyhood love.

In the 1940s and 50s Lacan was of course fascinated by the new science of cybernetics and information theory, referencing Claude Shannon and Norburt Wiener among others. Turing is not mentioned, but his thinking machines are. Furthermore, Lacan contends that their binary system is also the basis of language and the structure of the unconscious. 'The world of the symbolic is the world of the machine' is Lacan's mantra at this stage of his teaching and indeed, that in the

unconscious mathematics is sex: 'while the subject doesn't think about it, the symbols continue to mount one another, to copulate, to proliferate, to fertilize each other, to jump on each other, to tear each other apart' (Lacan, 1988: 185). Both Turing and Lacan, in their different ways, establish that thought is an effect of symbolization that does not necessarily require a human brain.

The missed encounter between Turing and Lacan is ironic because even as Lacan turned to cybernetics, Turing had already undertaken psychoanalysis in an endeavour to achieve a greater understanding of the mind. It should be noted that Turing's analysis was entirely unrelated to his conviction for homosexuality and the sentence of 'chemical castration' that apparently lead to his suicide in 1954. According to Turing's brother, psychoanalysis was an experience that he highly praised. (Hodges, 2014: 611]. Indeed, it was during his analysis with Franz Greenbaum that he wrote a curious short story concerning the events of December 1951 that lead to his conviction. In the story Turing fictionalizes himself as 'Alec Pryce' who has just completed a new paper on 'interplanetary travel' that he considers

> better than [the one] he'd done since his mid-twenties when he had introduced the idea which is now becoming known as 'Price's buoy'. Alec always felt a glow of pride when this phrase was used. The rather obvious *double-entendre* rather pleased him too. He always liked to parade his homosexuality, and in suitable company Alec could pretend that the word was spelt without the 'u' ... Now that his paper was finished he might justifiably consider that he had earned another gay man, and he knew where he might find one that was suitable. (Hodges, 2014: 564-5).

'Pryce's buoy' is of course code for 'Turing's machine' that became the familiar name for the universal machine designed in 'On Computable Numbers' (1938). The 'boy'/'buoy' pun not only correlates boy and machine (in this case a nautical navigational marker and transmitter of signals), but also, given that U-Boy is a near homonym of U-Boat, condenses Arnold Murray, the boy who sunk him, on to the fatal objects he was trying to locate in the Atlantic Ocean through breaking the 'impossible' Naval version of Enigma. This complex signifier 'buoy' condenses the two main achievements for which Turing owes his much later posthumous fame (the Universal Turing Machine and the decryption of Naval Enigma) on to the object cause of his infamy and - presumably - his suicide; recognition is defined by death.

The correlation of boy and machine also suggests that Turing loved and desired phantasmatically and ambivalently in the register of the mother. Indeed in his research into how machines might 'learn' he took the model of a child attending an English school, subject to the same system of rewards and punishments as himself (see 'Intelligent Machinery, A Heretical Theory' in Copeland, 2004: 474-5). All the more ironic and traumatic for Turing, then, that the punishment for homosexuality that was inflicted on him by the British judicial system was chemical 'castration' through a course of oestrogen injections that resulted in the production of breasts. Turing was thus confronted, in a very alarming and violent way, with the question 'am I a man or a woman?' This profound disturbance to his body image, perhaps collapsing the gap between fantasy and its actualization in social reality, may have seriously undermined the symbolic consistency of Turing's identity, resulting in its disintegration.

While no one really knows *why* Turing committed suicide, his method has become famous. Turing took two bites out of an apple laced with cyanide, an act that was directly inspired by Walt Disney's film *Snow White*. Turing saw the film in Cambridge, shortly after its release in 1937. It is reported that 'he was very taken with the scene where the Wicked Witch dangles an apple on a string into a boiling brew of poison, muttering

> Dip the apple in the brew

> Let the Sleeping Death seep through

He liked to chant the prophetic couplet over and over again'. (Hodges, 2014: 189) This was the same year that his essay 'Computable Numbers' was published, and also the first time, according to his biographer, that he contemplated using an apple as a means of suicide. (164). In the year of his conviction, Turing again mentioned *Snow White* to his 'training partner', Alan Garner (Turing was an excellent athlete and long distance runner). Garner concurred that, as a child, he had also been 'terrified' by 'the image of the poisoned apple' and shared this secret with Turing. In 2011, Garner recalled that Turing 'used to go over the scene in detail, dwelling on the ambiguity of the apple, red on one side, green on the other, one of which gave death'. For Garner 'their shared trauma … remained a bond.' (Hodges, 2014: xxv-xxvi)

Disney's *Snow White* is of course based on a tale in the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Childhood and Household Tales) collected by the Brother's Grimm. Like many of these tales it is set in a mythical milieu dominated by masters and their slaves. Indeed Jack Zipes in a forthcoming book on the many versions of 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice' regards Hegel's famous myth of the master and slave as a 'variation' of the German tale obsessed by the question of mastery (see Merriam, 2015). Hegel's master-slave narrative from the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is extremely important to Lacan, particularly as interpreted by Alexandre Kojève in seminars held in Paris in the mid-1930s, seminars attended regularly by Lacan. It is this tale that, along with Henri Wallon's work and Freud's paper 'On Narcissism', provides the basis for the 'mirror stage' and Imaginary register that enabled Lacan to replace the triangular structure of Oedipus with his own 'quarternary' structure of myth. The shift away from Oedipus is outlined in Lacan's paper 'The Neurotic's Individual Myth' (1953) on Freud's case study on the 'Rat Man'. Lacan finds in Hegel's stand off between two combatants that results in the dialectic of the master and the slave, an essential mirror relation defined and 'mediated' by death.

> one might say that the theory of narcissism, as I just set it forth, explains certain facts which otherwise remain enigmatic in Hegel. After all, in order for this dialectic of the death struggle, the struggle for pure power, to be initiated, death must not be actualized, since the dialectical movement would cease for lack of combatants; death must be imagined. (Lacan, 1953)

The combatant who does not risk his life in the struggle for pure prestige becomes a slave and must works for the enjoyment of the other combatant who has now become his master. The slave is thus condemned to wait for the master to die if he is himself to one day live and enjoy in the image of the master. But in his waiting and identification with the death of the master he exists in the 'sleeping death' of procrastination and deferral familiar to the obsessional neurotic, but also for Lacan characteristic of 'the existential attitude of modern man'. (Lacan, 1953) Lacan's 'quaternary structure' emerges from this tale whereby the subject ($) is directed to work by the signifier of the master (S1) in order to produce a knowledge (S2) that is mediated by an image or object of jouissance (a) mortified in death.

In *Snow White* we can see how Hegel's rather macho tale is feminized. A situation of (step-) mother-daughter rivalry, played out in the absence of the father, results in the daughter being put to work in a scullery maid's rags in order to occlude her beauty. The mirror-relation is explicitly invoked in the famous scenes where the stepmother calls on 'the slave in the magic mirror' to adjudicate upon who is the 'fairest in the land'. The general narcissistic structure of the film is underscored when Snow White's slavish conditions are revealed in the following scene that finds her singing 'I'm wishing for the one I love to find me one day' into a well, the shot rising up from the perspective of the water's reflection, along with Snow White's reverberating voice, no doubt referencing the presence of Echo in Ovid's original tale from *Metamorphosis*. The main part of the film is set in the mine-worker's cottage, home of the seven 'Dwarves' who become infantilized as Snow White's mature beauty - that the magic mirror has now conceded surpasses that of the Queen - is fully realized in a maternal register of cooking and housework. It is in this setting that Snow White remains until she receives the apple from the jealous Queen that sends her into the 'sleeping death' to await the arrival of her handsome prince who will awaken her with a kiss.

David Leavitt sees this as the 'most obvious message' of Turing's repetition of the act of eating a poisoned apple, to evoke the romantic fantasy of the return of the master in the form of the handsome prince (Leavitt, 2007: 280), remarking on this 'chilling' decision to 'camp up' his death in this way. Certainly Disney's wicked Queen is a worthy member of the pantheon of Hollywood femme fatales that became such figures of identification or 'Diva worship' for the pre-Stonewall gay community. Turing's repetition of course places him at the point of a dual identification with evil mother and virtuous daughter, situated at the point of rivalry over who best embodies the signifier of the Other's desire. He both applies the poison to the apple and eats it, apparently fascinated at the binary nature of its red and green colour signifying life and death, good and evil, presence and absence and so on like the symbolic or 'phallic' (castrating/castrated) function of the women themselves. A curious detail concerns Turing's own mother who refused to believe that her son could have killed himself, arguing that it was an accident caused by Turing's messiness. She was convinced that he must have got cyanide on his perpetually ink-stained hands. 'This was, of course, what she had always said might happen … even up to the year before his death Mrs Turing was chiding his son to '*Wash* your hands, Alan, and get your *nails* clean. And don't put your *fingers* in your mouth!' (Hodges, 2014: 615)[1]. The first act of Snow White in her new domestic role as mother of her Dwarf worker-children is to get them to wash their hands before dinner, much to their horror.

Mother-daughter-child-worker, Turing's desire is mediated, displaced and animated along this metonymic chain as if on a reel of film, unwinding around the central spool of death whose place is marked by the apple. According to Leavitt, Turing 'often told his friends that he ate an apple a day before going to bed' (280), presaging sleep and dreams - those animations produced by the automaton of the unconscious, its death drive. It is a coincidence that *Snow White*, the first full-length animation, and Turing's Universal Machine were produced in 1937. Both provide in the form of a thin strip of celluloid, on the one hand, and an infinitely long thin strip of paper in which 0s and 1s can be read, erased and written, on the other, the basis for the animation of images, writing and ultimately thought. 1937 is also the date of Kojève's final seminars on Hegel in which he discloses how the desire of the slave to live may realize itself through work in the image of his products. 'It is the realization of his project, of his idea; hence, it is he that is realized in and by this product, and consequently he contemplates himself when he contemplates it' (Kojève, 1989: 25). Pre-eminently such contemplation is drawn to, and distracted by, cinema screens and ultimately the screens of the modern computer, where the promise of life's awakening flickers in the mechanically animated dreams of death's sleep.

Turing's insertion into the mythical narrative that is animated in Disney's version of the Snow White tale can easily be plotted across the four points of Lacan's quaternary structure in such a way that it also corresponds to the Discourse of the Hysteric.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \$ & \rightarrow & S1 \\ a & // & S2 \end{array}$$

in the positions of
agent   other
truth   production

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[1] The infantilizing tone testifies to the ambivalence of Turing's relationship with his mother. Hodges notes in his biography that in Turing's 'analysis of his dreams, he was surprised to find that many concerned, or could be interpreted as relating to, his mother in hostile terms' (Hodges, 2014: 606). Elsewhere, Hodges claims that Turing nursed 'resentment' towards her (606), and 'if Alan's friends heard him disparage his mother, they usually heard nothing of his father' (606). As part of his analysis with Greenbaum, Turing produced two 'dream books' that were read by his brother John before being destroyed. His brother was apparently very disturbed by the 'scarifying' comments about his mother alongside detailed accounts of his homosexual activities. (618)

The hysteric ($) addresses the signifier of the master (S1) (the hysteric wants a master to rule, according to Lacan, 2007: 33), that is placed in the position of otherness because the master is merely a signifier, a semblant of someone who is absent, or dead, or yet to be born. The hysteric wants to bring the master back to his desire which in the case of Snow White and her mother requires a narcissistic concern for being the signifier of the Other's desire in the form of an Ideal of beauty or virtue in the image of unsurpassed 'fairness' (imaginary phallus or *agalma* of the ideal feminine form). Beauty masters the desire of the master: 'the appearance of beauty intimidates and stops desire' (Lacan, 1992: 238). At the same time, the supremacy of this beauty has to be confirmed by the judgment of the 'slave in the mirror'; it is ultimately a reflection of the slave's standard of measurement or rule (S2). Beauty is therefore an effect of knowledge that has to be produced, again in the case of *Snow White*, in the mirror of culture, folk tales, the cinema and so on. She wants to produce a man - she wants her Prince to come - but the truth of this desire is the apple (a) that she actually receives, Biblical signifier both of the desire to know and the 'Fall' from Eden that is formalized in the absence of a sexual relation ('And I will put enmity between thee and the woman' Genesis, 3, 15). For the Protestant tradition that informed both German folk tales and the British education system, Eve, like the Queen and subsequently Snow White, is the 'fairest of creation, last and best / Of all God's works' who becomes 'on a sudden lost / Defaced, deflow'red, and now to death devote!' (John Milton, *Paradise Lost*. IX: 896-901).

Colette Soler, in her essay on 'Hysteria and Scientific Discourse', argues that it is important not to simply confuse hysteria with femininity. In so far as femininity is a symptom of male desire, a masquerade in which a woman may enjoy herself as much as a man may desire, the hysteric's interest in the other's symptom 'means not consenting to being the symptom, and it does not mean having a symptom identical to a man's symptom'. (Soler, 2002: 52) If we locate Turing in this structure in the context of his identification with *Snow White*, we can see that his interest in femininity ultimately concerns the apple, the object of knowledge (of life and death and sexual difference). In his enigmatic consumption of the poisoned apple, Turing produces a desire to know the secret truth of his death in a context, at the height of the Cold War, where his life and jouissance were being violently curtailed and his achievements shrouded by the Official Secrets Act[2]. '[The hysteric's] desire is sustained by the Other's symptom, to the extent that one could almost say that she makes herself a cause thereof, but a cause of ... knowledge ... because she would like to inspire a desire to know in the Other' (Soler, 2002: 52).

Snow white's apple, and the apple of Alan Turing who imitated her in the fatal act of taking a bit out of it, was binary, or digital, red on one side, green on the other, one half healthy, the other half poisoned. This was a fact that fascinated Turing (Hodges, 2014: xxv-xxvi) such that in that fascination we can perhaps indeed see a symptom of the fatal character of the object of techno-scientific discourse that in its incessant desire to know its other (its object cause of desire) 'vapourizes' the subject into data (see Lacan, XVII: 105).

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[2] The truth about Turing's acts in World War Two, for example, did not come to light for another 30 years.

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