



Alan Turing: Unlocking the Enigma (Kindle Single)

By David Boyle

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Alan Mathison Turing.

Mathematician, philosopher, codebreaker, a founder of computer science, and the father of Artificial Intelligence, Turing was one of the most original thinkers of the last century - and the man whose work helped create the computer-driven world we now inhabit.

But he was also an enigmatic figure, deeply reticent yet also strikingly naïve. Turing's openness about his homosexuality at a time when it was an imprisonable offense ultimately led to his untimely death at the age of only forty-one.

In 'Alan Turing: Unlocking the Enigma', David Boyle reveals the mysteries behind the man and his remarkable career. Aged just 22, Turing was elected a fellow at King's College, Cambridge on the strength of a dissertation in which he proved the central limit theorem. By the age of 33, he had been awarded the OBE by King George VI for his wartime services: Turing was instrumental in cracking the Nazi Enigma machines at the top secret code breaking establishment at Bletchley Park during the Second World War.

But his achievements were to be tragically overshadowed by the paranoia of the post-War years. Hounded for his supposedly subversive views and for his sexuality, Turing was prosecuted in 1952, and forced to accept the humiliation of hormone treatment to avoid a prison sentence. Just two years later, at the age of 41 he was dead. The verdict: cyanide poisoning.

Was Turing's death accidental as his mother always claimed? Or did persistent persecution drive him to take his own life?

'Alan Turing: Unlocking the Enigma' seeks to find the man behind the science, illuminating the life of a person who is still a shadowy presence behind his brilliant achievements.

David Boyle's work has been widely praised.

David Boyle is a British author and journalist who writes mainly about history and new ideas in economics, money, business and culture. He lives in Crystal Palace, London. His books include 'Unheard Unseen: Warfare in the Dardanelles', 'Towards the Setting Sun: The Race for America' and 'The Age to Come'.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Like that of many a great thinker, Alan Mathison Turing's reputation has been subject to the bruising whims of history. Born in 1912, Turing accomplished more in his short 42 years than even most geniuses manage in twice that time. Nazi code breaker, pioneer of computing, innovative mathematician, and apparent suicide, Turing came up with the famous "test" that bears his name: if a human can't tell the difference between communicating with another human or with a computer, that computer (program) passes. As with most historical notables, though, Turing was as idiosyncratic, conflicted, and ultimately interesting a person as he has become as an icon. After World War II, his increasingly explicit homosexuality -- then a punishable offense in his native Britain -- led to his growing alienation and eventual taking of his own life by cyanide. As a primer on the life and accomplishments of this intellectual giant, David Boyle's Kindle Single serves well, marking the House of Lords's long overdue pardoning of Turing's "sex crimes" in 2013 with an energetic narrative that weaves the undisputed facts of Turing's life together with an undoing of certain persistent myths and a reverent encapsulation of his import. --*Jason Kirk*

Users Review

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