



## Homosexuality in Morten Tyldum's *The Imitation Game* Movie

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### Abstract

This research is aimed to find out the reasons of the main character's homosexuality, Alan Turing, and the social condition in England 1950s about homosexuality that reflected in *The Imitation Game* movie. In analyzing the data, the authors applied a descriptive-qualitative method. Furthermore, the data were collected by watching *The Imitation Game* movie and reading Turing's *Imitation Game: A Discussion With The Benefit of Hind-sight* written by Kirkpatrick, B. and Klingner, B. The research result indicates that psychodynamic factors and environment factors play a significant role in inflicting Turing's homosexuality. Moreover, social condition in England 1950s towards homosexuality was forbidden and considered as a crime which caused some effects to Turing's life. Later after his identity as a homosexual were revealed, he was convicted by the government which turned him ending his life.

**Key words:** Alan Turing, genetic structuralism, homosexuality.

### Introduction

Human and love are two things that cannot be separated. Human were created by God with soul and feeling that filled with love. People think of love as the center of understanding romantic relationships between man and woman but that is not the whole or the most accurate. There are so many different kinds of love that we can describe in this world. Some people misinterpreted their feeling and fall in love with the same sex as them. Man loves man or woman loves woman, for instance. That phenomenon called homosexuality.

Homosexuality is described "as a persistent and predominant sexual attraction to persons of one's own gender, men being sexually attracted to men and women being sexually attracted to women" [1]. However, not all of people who attracted to same-sex described themselves as gay or lesbian. This homosexuality phenomenon is reflected in one of movie, directed by Morten Tyldum, *The Imitation Game*.

*The Imitation Game* which is based on the biography of "Alan Turing: The Enigma" written by Andrew Hodges, the writer then read the biography and found several conditions where the main character, Alan Turing, suffered because of his feeling to the same-sex as him [2]. Turing (1912-1954) was an English computer scientist, mathematician, logician, cryptanalyst and theoretical biologist. He was highly influential in the development of theoretical computer science, providing a formalization of the concepts of algorithm. He committed suicide in the end of his life by taking cyanide poison because of his homosexuality's problems [3].

In today's society, many children are told that if they are too close to the opposite sex, it means they have a special feeling to each other. However, several of them may find out that they like the same sex as them and feel

uncomfortable with the opposite sex. They probably feel that it is the right thing to feel that way. Many people claim that LGBT people are greedy and obnoxious for wanting these things, like representation, acceptance and safe spaces, but anyone who identifies as LGBT has to go through ridicule for coming out, harassment for who they are, the risk of being kicked out is very high in some cases and then they might not even have any safe spaces near them where they can be themselves. These all lead to depression, anxiety or sometimes even suicide. If only we can find a way to normalize same-sex couples, transgender couples and other couples from the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender) community, we as a society would lose many stereotypes we have surrounding LGBT [4].

This paper focuses on the reasons of the main character's homosexuality, Alan Turing, and to find out the social condition in England 1950s, about homosexuality that reflected in the movie

## Theoretical Reviews

Pomeroy in his research, "Dr. Kinsey and the Institute for Sex Research", stated that there are two main theories as to what causes homosexual attractions. One of that is homosexual orientation is essentially dictated by genetic or biological factors or simply say that people are born gay. The other theory is that homosexual attractions develop as primarily as a result of psychological and environmental influences and early experiences [5].

The researcher of the infamous sex researcher Alfred Kinsey, is often used by those seeking the moral approval of homosexuality, there is one point on which he is seldom quoted "his rejection of a biological origin for homosexuality" [6]. Kinsey's colleagues and biographer, Wardell Pomeroy, reported that by the end of 1940 he had recorded more than 450 homosexual histories, enough to convince him that the psychologists were making matters worse by starting with the assumption that homosexuality was an inherited abnormality which could not be cured simply because it was inherent. Kinsey was convinced that there was absolutely no evidence of inheritance [5]. There are two main factors that can be the causes of homosexuality, which are psychodynamic factor and environmental factor [7].

## Methodology

This research applied a descriptive-qualitative method to describe characteristics of a population or some phenomenon in the data related to the topic of the research. The authors used this method to describe specific behavior as it occurs in The Imitation Game movie.

In this analysis, the data were collected by watching Morten Tyldum's The Imitation Game movie carefully and intensively. Next, the authors read "Turing's Imitation Game: A Discussion With The Benefit of Hind-sight" written by Kirkpatrick, B. and Klingner, B which made it easier for the authors to understand the whole story of the movie.

Furthermore, this research used Goldmann's Framework of Genetic structuralism approach to analyze the collected data [8]. Genetic structuralism approach focuses on the autonomy of literary works and the sociology of literature that focuses on the relation between literary works and other factors outside the literary works, such as the authors, society, and historical background. The authors analyzed from two angles, which are intrinsic and extrinsic. The study begins with the study of intrinsic elements such as characters and characterization (how they unite and coherence) as its basic data. Following this, the research linked the various elements with the reality of society. Literary works are seen as a reflection of the historical background, which can reveal social, cultural, political, economy and other aspects. The important events of the era will be connected directly to the intrinsic elements of literary work.

## Findings and Discussion

### The main reasons of Turing's homosexuality

The factors or the cause of homosexual into two: psychodynamic factors and environment factors [7]. In this analysis, the authors found that psychodynamic and environment factors play a significant role in inflicting Turing's homosexuality.

#### *Psychodynamic Factors*

The psychodynamic factor includes homosexual due to the failure of Oedipus phase, it means that the young boy imitating, copying and joining in masculine dad-type behaviors, or male homosexuality typically develops in the first two year of the man's life, or homosexuality of one person and homosexual as a sexual variation of heterosexual behavior. It is included the family role in growth of children, especially father.

However, in Morten Tyldum's The Imitation Game movie, there are no depiction about Turing's family background, except when he mentioned about how his mother said that he was an odd duck. From here, the authors analyzed that Turing's relationship with his parents was not so good, and they also put Turing at the boarding school. This has something to do with the psychodynamic factors that could make Turing becoming a homosexual. According to Maureen Black in Finello's article stated that "we found that fathers who are involved with their children have

children with fewer problems” [9]. In consideration of Turing did not grow up with his family, he did not actually get to learn from his family, especially the role of his father. Following this, Johnston stated that if society loses its grasp of a virtue such as masculinity, the need for boys to internalize that quality does not just disappear [10]. Boys without fathers will look elsewhere for masculine models and may embrace a caricature or distortion of that virtue. In our entertainment, especially video games and movies, men are often shown as hyper-masculine exaggeration. There is reason to believe that certain life experience can also contribute to the development of homosexuality, such as homosexual behavior occurs with increased frequency in situations of sexual segregation such as prisons, ships and even private boarding schools.

Boys are born male, of course, but they are not born with a full understanding of what it means to be male, to be masculine. It is something they learn more about as they grow up. The authors analyzed that Turing lived in boarding school, far away from his family has a huge impact to the development of his homosexuality. He did not learn more from his father about how to be a man, he learned everything by himself and thus caused it to be false and damaging. When fathers are absent or when a good understanding from the role of a father is lost, blurred, rejected, distorted or denigrated, boys will have a very difficult time knowing what it means to be solid, healthy men, and it will be even more of a challenge to become one.

### **Environmental Factors**

In this analysis, the authors found that in Morten Tyldum’s *The Imitation Game* movie, the main character Turing did not have a good partnership during his life. Turing was bullied by his classmates because he was different. He did not make conversation to other and preferred being alone. Turing thought all of his friends were jealous because he was smarter than them and he did not want to care about people who did not like him. He always had his own world. The relationship that Turing had with his surroundings, with his classmates, is the other reason why he became homosexuality. The authors believed that Turing must be felt so special when Christopher helped him and wanted to be his one and only friend. Lively stated that children are often feel deeply traumatized by sexual abuse and this trauma often results in the adoption of a homosexual lifestyle as an adult, and this is what happened to Turing [11].

### **Social Condition in England 1950s about Homosexuality as reflected in Morten Tyldum’s *The Imitation Game* Movie**

The setting of the movie was taken mostly at Bletchley Park, England, United Kingdom. It was the central site for British code-breakers during World War II. It housed the Government Code and Cypher School which regularly penetrated the German Enigma, which Turing was one of the members of Enigma’s code-breaker. In this part, the authors analyzed that how the social condition looked at homosexuality during 1950s according to the time setting of the movie, when the story being told. The authors found several points as reflected in the movie on how people during that time reacted to the main character’s homosexuality, Alan Turing.

Nowadays, homosexuality is in the news a lot, with homosexuals getting married and homosexuals serving in the armed and homosexuals forming their own soft-ball leagues, even homosexual as a famous singer. Societal attitudes towards homosexuality are changing. It is no longer acceptable for young men who have been drinking after a hard day at work to find a gay man to beat up. This sort of bullying is viewed now universally with disapproval. Even, these days, beating up homosexuals was regarded as improper, because these changing attitudes, those who hate or despise or disapprove of homosexuality are somewhat at loss. However, it was different to what happened in around 1950s. If nowadays, people will look at homosexual as such a normal thing, it was not like that, years before today. The authors found that Turing, who was a professor in university, tried to hide his identity as a homosexual, because it was improper, especially his “genius” image that he had. At least, people should respect him in way how his genius useful to everyone at the time.

**Table 1.** Dialogue 1

Sergeant Staehl	:	“I trailed Turing to a pub last night, where he met a bloke. They exchange an envelope. So, I followed the guy, picked him up, gave him a good shake... Here, I’ll show you”
Sergeant Staehl	:	“He’s a bloody poofter. He confessed.”
Detective Nock	:	“What?”
Sergeant Staehl	:	“The man admitted it. Arnold Murray. Hangs around that pub, men pay him for a go. Turing is one of the men that paid. Only Mr. Murray got the bright idea of robbing Turing’s house after, with a friend. That’s what Turing’s hiding, he’s a poof not a spy”
Detective Nock	:	“No.”
Sergeant Staehl	:	“What’s the matter? We can charge university professor with indecency”
Detective Nock	:	“No. No. This is bloody rubbish. Turing is up to something important.”
Superintendent Smith	:	“He committed a crime. He broke the law. And with a bloke, Jesus Christ! It’s bloody disgusting”

From the conversation above, the authors analyzed that homosexuality was not something that people can relate to during that time, in England 1950s. The first is when Detective Nock could not believe what Sergeant Staehl reported to him, he could not believe that Turing was actually a homosexual who paid a poof for his homosexual's desire. The second, when Sergeant Staehl said that what Turing did was indecency and they can charge him by breaking the law. The third is when Superintendent Smith said that Turing was actually committed a crime by being a homosexual. The way Smith emphasized his words describe how disgusted he was by Turing's behavior, the same thing goes to how some religions' perspective in homosexuality. For instance, Buddhism sees homosexuality along with hatred and ignorance, and they see homosexuality as a poison. Another example is Islam, Islam strongly prohibits sexual intercourse which include same-sex relationships. The justification for this prohibition is based the fact that these relationships operate outside the marriage contract, which makes them illegal according to Islamic law. These acts are legally refer to the cases of same-sex relationship as homosexuality, instead these acts are legally catalogued as zina crimes which includes the modern criminal categories of fornication, adultery, rape, homosexuality and prostitution.

Every country, of course, has their own regulations to punish someone who break the law, especially in England 1950s on punishing homosexuality. Turing was proved as a homosexuality after several investigations, and the news were all over the newspaper. The whole country found out about a University professor who became homosexuality. By the legal proceeded in England 1950s, they had two types of punishment. Turing was given two choices by the judge who was in charge, whether two years in prison or hormonal therapy. However, Turing chose to take the hormonal therapy, which he had to go for oestrogen treatments every week, and he took the chemical castration. Later, he was found dead by took a cyanide poison.

## Conclusion

Based on the discussion from the previous chapter, the authors concluded that Morten Tyldum's *The Imitation Game* movie released in 2013 is a movie that reflected the biography of Alan Turing, computer scientist, cyptanalyst, mathematician, who was a very important person during World War II. The story based on the story of how Alan Turing and his team broke The Enigma, German Nazi codes.

In Morten Tyldum's *The Imitation Game* movie depicted about the struggle, the story how Turing broke the Enigma, and also implicitly depicted about Turing's homosexuality. The main reason of his homosexuality most likely because of the failure of his Oedipus phase, also because other factors such as psychodynamic factor and environmental factor which make him even had greater chance to grow as a homosexual.

Furthermore, Homosexuality during World War II or around 1950s were forbidden and considered as a crime. Turing was convicted by the government because of his homosexuality which turned Turing to end his life at the end.

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