

Talking Points -

Most of you listening have probably already heard about Alan Turing before, if not from a textbook or online article, then probably from the movie the imitation game the genius mind who

However, beneath that layer of “he was forgotten because he was homosexual” there is also a “Nobody talks about him because the people responsible for what happened to him want people to forget.” which is disgusting. At least honor the man who busted his ass to save the country that persecuted him and, by extension, probably the whole world too. For anyone who doesn’t know exactly what he did, Alan Turing was the genius and war hero who worked day and night to decode the Nazi’s enigma Codes during World War II and is considered the father of modern computer science and AI. Almost all computing devices to this day are based upon the computing system he came up with to better decode the nazi’s encrypted messages, so you can thank him for all the computers, phones, digital TVs, iPods, digital cameras and microwave ovens you’ve ever used in your life.

At the time, homosexuality was considered a mental illness to be treated, and allegedly, the fact that he was gay was a sort of open secret with the military. In fact, when working for the military he was allowed numerous “friends” to satisfy his needs. This was to prevent sexual frustration so his mind could work at full potential. It’s unknown if this is true, but if it is, it’s a bit.. Telling that the government would condemn homosexuality to a mental illness status, then enable it if it benefited them.

After the war, he was exposed to the public as gay in 1952 when a gay lover of his helped an accomplice rob Turing’s house. During police investigations, it came out that Turing was homosexual, and he was arrested for “Gross Indecency.” He was given the choice to either be imprisoned or be “treated.” He chose being castrated. His homosexuality was “treated” by being chemically castrated. He was given drugs to destroy his testicles-where some practitioners believed his homosexuality came from- to replace them with “heterosexual testicles.”

On June 7, 1954, at just forty two years of age, Alan Mathison Turing killed himself by swallowing cyanide.

One of the greatest minds of the century- Hell, ever, was gone because society was unwilling to accept him.

Tragically enough, he is not the only one to undergo this torture, but just the most well-known example of the medical abuse of homosexuals.

In the 1950s-1960s, some therapists employed abusive aversion therapy in their treatments of gay patients not unlike those seen in A Clockwork Orange. Seriously dystopian stuff. During their “treatment” the men were shown pictures of naked men, then given electric shocks (sometimes to their genitals) or drugs to induce vomiting. Once they could no longer tolerate looking at naked men, then, they might either be shown images of naked women or sent on a “date” with a young lady- Usually a nurse involved. The methods varied, but they were all equally cruel.

“For Eugen Steinach, a pioneering Austrian endocrinologist, homosexuality was rooted in a man’s testicles. This theory led to testicle transplantation experiments in the 1920s during which gay men were castrated, then given “heterosexual” testicles.” [\(link\)](#)

And even crueller were the treatments where patients were lobotomized or given electroshock therapy via electrodes implanted directly into their brains. The goal in these therapies were to make the subjects repulsed by homosexuality and no longer experience attraction to the same sex out of that repulsion.

It’s really no wonder that these treatments met lots of resistance from gay rights activists. For one, when homosexuality was declared a “sociopathic personality disturbance,” the label of mentally ill became just another excuse to discriminate against the lgbt, and on top of that, the so-called treatment used to “cure” homosexuals was utterly inhumane.

During the Stonewall Riots in New York City, lgbt activists disrupted the 1970 and 1971 annual meetings of the APA, trying to bring the APA’s attention to less harmful modern sexual research theories, or merely no theories at all. At the time, there was actually a growing anti-psychiatry movement. Many critics pointed out a lot of faults in medical history of diagnostic excess- One example being “Drapetomania” which was a 19th century diagnosis used for slaves who ran away from their captors due to “wanderlust.” BIG yikes.

The protests led by the gay activists soon enough managed to gain the APA’s attention, and led to educational panels at the next two conferences in 1971, a panel entitled “Gay is Good” featured the activists Barbara Gittings and Frank Kameny, who explained to their audience the stigma the pathologization of homosexuality has caused. They returned in 1972, this time accompanied by the masked John Fryer, M.D.; He was going by the alias of Dr. H Anonymous, who was a homosexual psychiatrist who couldn’t reveal his identity for the very realistic fear of professional consequences. Dr. H Anonymous went on to explain in the panel the discriminations that gay psychiatrists had to face in their very own profession.

Later, the APA engaged in a secretive deliberation of considering whether or not homosexuality should be a psychiatric diagnosis. Much debate was had, and in 1973, during the annual APA conference, even more people were there to debate whether or

not homosexuality should be in the APA's Nomenclature. The scientific wing of the APA also grappled with questioning just what constituted a mental disorder, but- Eventually Robert Spitzer, who among a committee he'd gathered, reviewed all the characteristics of all known mental disorders and concluded that with the exception of homosexuality and, in their words, other "sexual deviations," all mental disorders caused subjective distress and impaired one's social functioning. Having come to this conclusion, The Nomenclature Committee assented that Homosexuality, per se, was not a mental disorder.

And after much reviewing from various other APA committees, on December 15, 1973, Homosexuality was finally removed from the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders). Homosexuality was no longer officially considered a mental illness, the battle was won. To this day, in fact, this is cited as one of the biggest victories in queer history.

However, there was one problem. Even if the government stopped officially treating it as a disease, would the medical malpractice stop?

In conversion camps to this day, young queers who have been shipped off by their unaccepting parents are tortured. They're electrocuted, starved, burnt, frozen, regularly exorcized, and more unspeakable methods to try and force them to be someone they are not. conversion camps are a scourge on this earth that are not spoken of enough. They are torture camps enabled by prejudice, and they need to be stopped. If we do not learn our history, we are doomed to repeat it, and it is repeating right now. This is a call to action. Take them down.