

As Tribute to Alan Turing



[Breaking the Code:](#)

[Alan Turing and Other Valuable Eccentrics in WWII](#)

By Dr. Scott Perry

Abstract: Dr. Perry's paper will commemorate and celebrate the achievements of Turing, against the backdrop of the contribution of intellectuals to the War effort in the early 1940s. It will examine Turing's early commentary on 'the universal computing machine' and the lingering impact of his work on the notion that a machine could replicate human intelligence. In addition, it will place Turing within the context of the estimated 10,000 men and women who worked at Bletchley Park, some of whom have only in recent years, and at very advanced ages, commented on their experiences and on the famously eccentric individuals who labored there. The paper will advance two main points. First, that homophobia can be lethal, not just for individuals, but for entire societies and for the future of scientific progress. What could an Alan Turing have done, had he lived into his 80s or 90s, and not been prosecuted and persecuted for his homosexual identity? Second, there is no knowing what skills, possessed by



today's students, will turn out to be 'useful' and 'relevant' tomorrow. That degree in anthropology, for example—whatever others might say—could, as in Bletchley Park, be deemed useful. Societies should value their most eccentric members—those people can save lives under the right circumstances.

When: Thursday, October 11, 2012 at 6:00pm

Where: Poynter Corner (Poynter Library)