*“The Imitation Game”, USA,* 2014. Director: Morten Tyldum. Starring: Benedict Cumberbatch, Keira Knightley, and Mark Strong.

**The Secret Code**

The film is a biopic of Alan Turing, the man who saved millions of lives during World War II, by cracking the code of the machine used by the Nazis to send coded messages.

Leading actor Benedict Cumberbatch –Sherlock Holmes in the successful TV series, playing Shakespeare on theatre shortly, and in this film playing a mathematician with a sturdy personality, a hero who succeeds in a mission after being humiliated since childhood for being different—undertakes the highly sensitive and complex task of building up his character: he confesses having used silence techniques learnt from Buddhist monks that have proven helpful as acting techniques, as demonstrated in “The Imitation Game” where his is a complex, true-to-life and moving performance.

One is almost unaware of the presence of Norwegian director Morten Tyldum, who does his work well, even in his breaking up of the plot, with well adjusted flash forwards and flashbacks that act as doors open to suspense, drama and cruelty of all sorts without the relief of lyricism, except for a brief moment of final personal victory, devoid of any hint of glory.

Turing was faced with an almost impossible task and it was estimated it would take millions of years to crack Nazi codes. He was one of the most relevant mathematicians of his time and the British Secret Service recruited him to joint their investigation team, comprising cryptographers, linguists, and different experts in hermeneutics, all of them --or almost all-- brilliant. Turing is surrounded by a select group and learns to engage in team work with the help of Joan (Keira Knightley, good performance); she approaches him as a determined woman whose fate is also different from what is expected of women at the time: motherhood, a household, waiting for her husband.

Turing was also different because he was homosexual and, at that time in England, declaring such behavior meant prison or the obligation to undergo hormonal injection treatment. Turing stood out in his team for his extreme modesty, unbearable at times. He ignored team work, but could not ignore that he had to hold on to the perseverance of a crossword player, relentlessly and stubbornly repeating the mechanic motions of his brain to crack the secret truth of a message… over and over again… In its format and operation, the copy of the Enigma machine was not different from the dedicated and hardworking brain Turing possessed. He could imitate the game of those rotating disks, committed to carry letters, working as anonymous and undaunted wizard apprentices. But Turing knew he was not only fighting against the Nazi machine, he was also fighting time, though he didn’t seem to admit it. Yet deep inside, he was logically confident that he would succeed. He was a lonely person as a result of abuse and humiliation experienced since early childhood, including his sexual choice, for which he was discriminated during his lifetime.

In addition to the recognition granted to him two years before the end of the war, he knew that cracking the Enigma Code allowed the Allies to learn what was going on in Stalingrad, helped the Disembarkment on Normandy beach, the Ardennes Assault and many other war scenarios.

Regardless belated and posthumous pardons granted by the British royalty, the British society still owes a lot to this exceptional man, who was the first to speak about digital language and computers. The English machine --that imitated its German rival “Enigma”-- responsible for the successful breakthrough was called “Christopher” and this machine would end up as the only being that accompanied Alan Turing till the end, right before he chose his own end.

***Juan Carlos Capo***