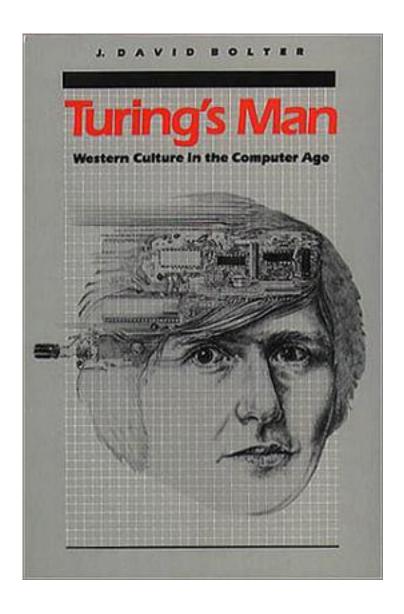
Turing's Man



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This book is a combination of the subject matter and outlooks of
various disciplines. It seeks to explain a technical subject (digital

br >computers and computer) programming) in a historical lighti¼Œ call-
br >ing upon the history of philosophical as well as technological
ideas and going as far back as the Greeks. This seems an odd
thing to do. It seems odd precisely because of that widely recog-
nized and still dangerous split in our intellectual life--the gulf
br>between the sciences and the humanities. Scientistsi¼Œ including
obr>applied scientists and engineersi¼Œ know very little history or phi-
losophy. Those in the humanities generally learn as little science
as they ~ua get away with. Many attempts have been made to
bridge the gapi¼Œ and this book can be read as one of them. I have
chosen to write about computers because these machines should < br > and i 1/4 © I think i 1/4 © will provide the sturdiest bridge between the world
of science and the traditional worlds of philosophyi'4@historyi'4@ and
 art. The computer is a medium of communication as well as a
scientific tooli¼Œ and it can be used by humanists as well as scien-
tists. It brings concepts of physicsi¼Œ mathematicsi¼Œ and logic into
the humanist s world as no previous machine has done. Yet it can
also serve to carry artistic and philosophical thinking into the sci-
entific community. I am tryingi¼Œ in other wordsi¼Œ to recognize and
 foster a process of cross-fertilization that has already begun. Sbr > In order to address scientists 1/4 © engineersi¼Œ and humanistsi¼Œ I must
cover ground that is familiar to each group. My explanation of the
br > computer is far too general to please the computer specialistii¼Œ but
I need to give the nonspecialist some idea of how the machine
br >works in order to explain its impact on our culture. Readers with
br >a background in classical and European philosophy and literature
will probably quarrel with my many generalizations about \"the
 Greek\" or \"the Western European\" mind. Again I have to be
br>generali¼Œ for I need to introduce a wide range of topics in order to
br >map out the areas of history and philosophy to which the com-
puter is relevant. The reader may come to his own conclusions
about the importance of pottery in the Greek world or that of the < br > steam engine in the nineteenth century. He may argue that the
idea of infinity is as important for philosophy and art today as it < br >

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