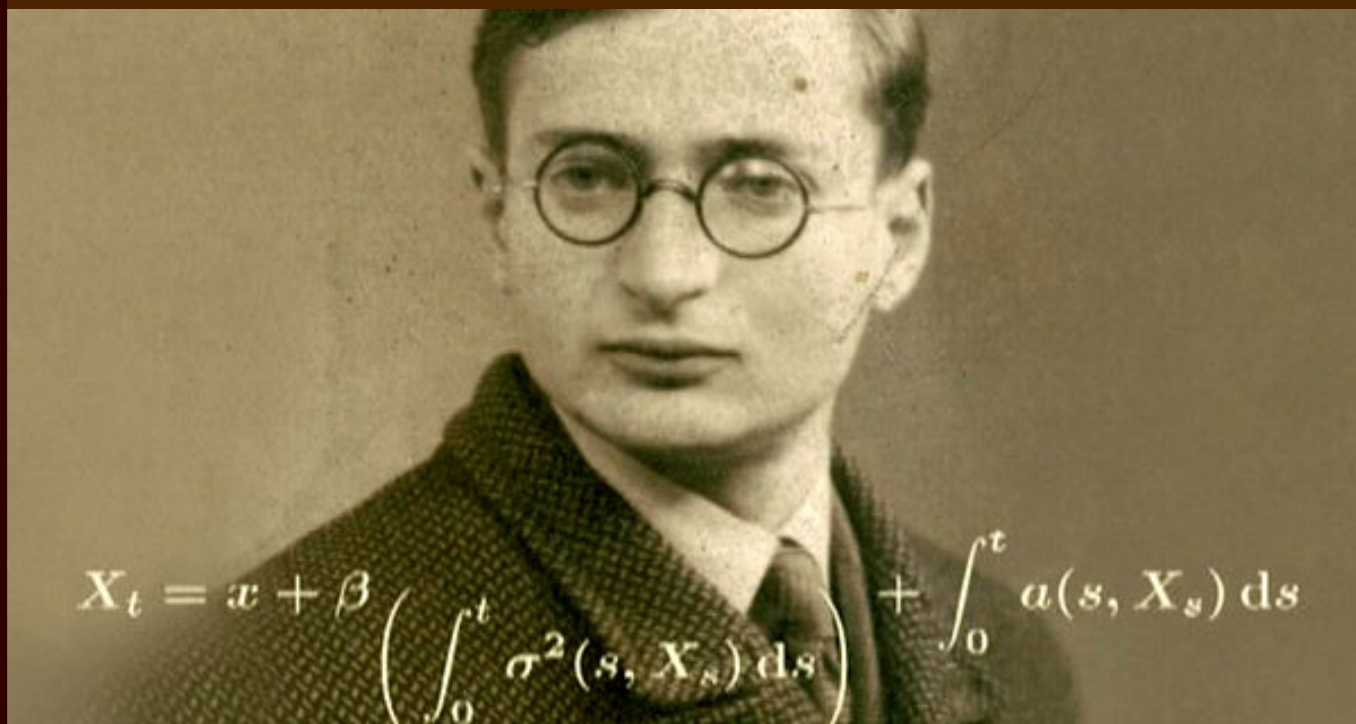




A film by Agnes Handwerk and Harrie Willems

Wolfgang Doeblin a mathematician rediscovered



It is not often that a movie is made about a mathematician.

Wolfgang Doeblin's life story, however, is anything but ordinary, and captures the imagination of anyone interested in the WWII period and in lost documents.

Wolfgang Doeblin is the son of the famous German writer, Alfred Doeblin. His family escaped from Nazi Germany to Paris where Doeblin studied mathematics under Frechet and proved to be a brilliant probabilist.

After WWII broke out in 1939, he was drafted as a simple soldier to the French army. Stationed near the French/German border, in the winter of 1939-1940, Wolfgang wrote his manuscript "On Kolmogorov's equation" and sent it as a sealed letter to the Academy of Sciences. A few months later, threatened to be captured by the German Wehrmacht, he committed suicide.

Doeblin's letter remained unopened and forgotten for 60 years. When opened, in May 2000, its contents caused a sensation among mathematicians.

The film documents scientific and human aspects of this amazing discovery and throws new light on the startling circumstances of Doeblin's death at the age of 25 (55 minutes).

In the second part of the film (27 minutes), Professor Marc Yor explains the contents of the manuscript; this part is intended for mathematicians.

Monday, May 5, 2008
3:15 PM
McCune Conference Room
HSSB 6020