

Caltech Technophobia II

Caltech Nikto Tossups

Written by 'a guy without a conscience! a dame without a heart!'

1. You may think that you can represent any function in terms of an infinite Fourier series of trigonometric functions, but if the function you are trying to approximate has a discontinuity, your approximation will have an error of 8.9490% on either side of the discontinuity, even in the limit of an infinite series! For ten points, what is this phenomenon, named after an American physicist best known for his work in thermodynamics?

Answer: Gibbs phenomenon

2. His first motion picture role, in Mario Camerini's 'The Men, What Rascals!' established him as a leading film star, and the 1940 film 'Two Dozen Red Roses' brought him success as a director. Along with Roberto Rossellini, he produced films which dealt compassionately with the problems of Italians after World War Two, including Academy Award winners 'Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow' and 'The Garden of the Finzi-Continis.' For ten points name this director better known for 'Shoeshine,' 'Umberto D.' and 'The Bicycle Thief.'

Answer: Vittorio De Sica

3. The evil spirit of putrefaction sets in about three hours after death, after which the body is bathed in the urine of a special white bull and adorned with religious garments. After three days of special rituals to strengthen the soul, the body is placed on a stone slab and a dog with a spot above each eye is brought near to chase away evil spirits. The corpse is then placed on a stone grating, or dakhma, where vultures pick the bones clean and allow them to fall into a pit below. For ten points, this is the proper method of corpse disposal for members of which religion?

Answer: Zoroastrianism

4. "When it comes to the population of Great Britain being invited by a multinational to wipe their bottoms on what appears to be the work of a Knight of the Realm, then a last stand must be taken." For ten points, what mathematician said this upon filing a copyright- infringement lawsuit against the Kimberley-Clark Corporation, who are making Kleenex quilted toilet paper with the nonrepeating tiled pattern he invented?

Answer: Sir Roger Penrose

5. The character of Long John Silver was partly based on this one-legged friend of Robert Louis Stevenson. Their friendship ended five years after "Treasure Island" was published, and after Stevenson's death this man wrote a bitter article attacking the contemporary view of Stevenson as a "seraph in chocolate". For ten points, identify this editor of the "National Observer", whose best-known work ends, "I am the master of my fate/ I am the captain of my soul."

Answer: William Ernest Henley

6. Ironically, if he had lived a hundred years later, he would have been denied an ecclesiastical appointment, since he himself came from a "converso" family. In 1483, however, it was he who led the charge against those with Jewish blood, along with sorcerors, sodomites, polygamists, Moors and so forth. For ten points, identify this priest, confessor to Queen Isabella, who was appointed the first grand

inquisitor in Spain.

Answer: Tomas de Torquemada

7. During the London run of "Evita" in 1978, Elaine Page, the star, and Tim Rice, the lyricist, began a long-term love affair. Rice was married, and the adulterous affair eventually appeared in the tabloids. It's not hard to see parallels between this love triangle and that of Anatoly, Florence, and Svetlana, especially considering that Rice wrote the role of Florence for Page, in, for ten points, what 1984 album and musical about a Soviet defector?

Answer: Chess (prompt on 'Florence' or 'Anatoly')

8. In 1888, he had to flee Germany after writing an inflammatory article in a socialist newspaper, "The People's Voice." Because he was a small, physically deformed hunchback, he was almost refused entry to the United States. In America he brought a new level of mathematical sophistication to the practice of electrical engineering and was largely responsible for the rapid introduction of AC technology. For ten points, identify this scientist whose eponymous equation describes power loss due to hysteresis.

Answer: Charles Proteus Steinmetz (original name: Karl August Rudolf Steinmetz)

9. Start three hundred miles off the coast of Japan. Travel south-east, past Hawaii to the Marquesas, then west past Papua New Guinea to Keeling Island, then northwest to Sri Lanka. Continue northwest into the Red Sea and through the Mediterranean, west to Atlantis. Go to the South Pole, then up the east coast of the Americas, east to Ireland, and north to the Lofoten Islands. You have now traveled roughly sixty thousand miles, as described in what 1869 novel by Jules Verne?

Answer: Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea

10. In 1798, New York agreed to grant Robert Fulton and Robert Livingston a monopoly on steamboat navigation in state waters if they developed a steamboat capable of traveling 4 miles per hour upstream on the Hudson River, which they did in 1907. A man later purchased from Fulton and Livingston the rights to operate steamboats between New York City and New Jersey, and in 1819 he sued another man who was running boats without authority. For ten points name these two men, the parties in an 1824 Supreme Court case, which established that states cannot interfere with the power of Congress to regulate commerce.

Answer: Gibbons v. Ogden

11. He has a master's degree in chemical engineering and took a Fulbright Scholarship to MIT. A former captain of the Swedish National Karate Team, at the 1996 Olympics he was the trainer for the U.S. Modern Pentathlon team. This tossup must break you unless you can identify, for ten points, this European heavyweight karate champion and co-star of "Universal Soldier" and "Rocky IV."

Answer: Dolph Lundgren

12. In April 1604 he was accused of throwing a plate of artichokes in the face of a waiter, and in October was arrested for throwing stones at the Roman Guards. In May 1605 he was seized for misuse of arms, and in July had to flee Rome because he had wounded a man in defense of his mistress. On May 29, 1606, he killed Ranuccio Tomassoni during a brawl over the disputed score of a tennis match. For ten points name this man, born Michelangelo Merisi, the artist of works such as 'Death of

the Virgin' and 'The Supper at Emmaus.'

Answer: Caravaggio (accept Michelangelo Merisi before that name is said)

13. He attempted to translate from the Latin "sense for sense" rather than "word for word". Thus, the Temple doctors who argued with the child Jesus were called "the wisest Witan that there were in Jerusalem", and the twelve Apostles were called "Christ's Thanes." For ten points, identify this ninth-century patron of the arts who translated Bede, Orosius, and Boethius into Anglo-Saxon when he wasn't too busy fighting the Danes.

Answer: Alfred the Great

14. In this genre of art, the beautiful courtesans that made up much of the subject matter were depicted as impossibly slender and graceful. Nevertheless, it was considered to be a "realist" art movement, just because it portrayed such ordinary people as actors and prostitutes from the "floating world" or entertainment quarter. For ten points, identify this type of Japanese art associated with woodcut printing and the work of Utamaro [oo-tah-mah-ro], Hiroshige [hee-ro-shee-geh], and Hokusai [hoax-sigh].

Answer: ukiyo-e [oo-kee-yo-eh]

15. "No, I haven't read Voltaire," he said candidly. "I've got to stop this motor," he choked. "The laser is broken," he said incoherently. "I know who turned out the lights," he hinted darkly. "I'm dying," he croaked. For ten points, puns of this form have what name, given in honor of an Edward L. Stratemeyer character who asserted, quipped, and ejaculated, but never just said anything.

Answer: Tom Swifties (accept Tom Swift-isms, etc.)

16. In October 1997, disguised in a wig and fake mustache and using the alias Ray Mebert, he pretended to be a management consultant at Logitech International. With the permission of cofounder Pierluigi Zappacosta, he told a group of executives that his credentials included work on a Procter and Gamble project to boost sales by improving the taste of soap. For ten points, who displayed a viewgraph of his most famous creation after convincing the group to write a cryptic and inane mission statement worthy of a certain pointy-haired boss?

Answer: Scott Adams

17. Pyrite, chalcopyrite, galena, cinnabar and sphalerite all contain this element, as do gypsum and barite. After oxygen and silicon, it is the most abundant constituent of minerals, and the ninth most abundant element in the universe. For ten points, what element was well known to the ancients, appearing in Genesis under the name of brimstone?

Answer: Sulfur (Accept: Sulfites before the word "element")

18. "Searching for a distant star/ Heading off to Iscandar/ Leaving all we love behind/ Who knows what dangers we'll find?/ We must be strong and brave/ Our home we've got to save/ If we don't in just one year/ Mother Earth will disappear!/ Fighting with the Gamilons/ We won't stop until we've won/ Then we'll return, and when we arrive/ The Earth will survive..." For ten points, these lyrics come from what Americanized version of the Japanese TV show, "Space Cruiser Yamato"?

Answer: Star Blazers (prompt on interrupt of "Space Cruiser Yamato" or "Space Battleship Yamato")

19. "There ain't enough salt for the beans" is the rough translation of "Les haricots sont pas sales," part of a popular chant in black Louisiana. Supposedly the word "haricot" [ah-ree-ko] was misheard and became the name of a style of music which was more syncopated and rhythmic than ordinary Cajun music. For ten points, identify this accordion-dominated style, originally called "la la" music.

Answer: _zydeco_

20. Her parents wanted her to be a pianist, but she made her stage debut in 1905 in 'Mrs. Temple's Telegram,' a performance for which critics called her 'the sweetest, most piquant ingenue on Broadway.' She gave up acting to marry Frank Frueauff in 1909, but returned after his death to great acclaim as an actress and director, with Brock Pemberton, of the 1944 smash 'Harvey.' For ten points name this woman in whose name Pemberton established an annual awards ceremony in 1947.

Answer: Antoinette _Perry_

21. His influence was so great that fashionable women in revolutionary France went bare-breasted while wearing the flimsy dresses of Sabine women. There was a general trend to imitate Roman dress, hairstyles, and furniture, all as represented in his paintings. For ten points, identify the so-called "Robespierre of the brush" who led the reaction against the Rococo style with his huge canvasses on classical subjects, such as the "Oath of the Horatii."

Answer: Jacques-Louis _David_

22. "I couldn't be fonder of you if you were my own son. But, well, if you lose a son, it's possible to get another. There's only one [of this]." It's "the stuff dreams are made of." For ten points, what object was supposedly given by the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem to Charles V, as 'rent' for the island of Malta?

Answer: The _Maltese Falcon_ (prompt on "Kasper Gutman")

23. If you were one of these, you could scale tall buildings and contort yourself to squeeze through tiny spaces. If you were a female, you might have sex once and spend the rest of your life pregnant. You could live for a week without a head, since you could go for a month without food but would die eventually without a mouth with which to drink water. If someone squashed you, you'd bleed white blood, and your crushed and lifeless body could be used to relieve the pain of stinging wounds. For ten points, you would be what evil pest of suborder Blattaria, lurking in warm, dark spaces and avoiding the Raid guy?

Answer: _Cockroach_