
Who is this mmathematician ?

S. Parthasarathy
drpartha@gmail.com

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The double ‘m’ in the title is not a typo. It is based on a definition made earlier by this same author ¹.

You will find below, short clues about some famous male mathematicians (mmathematician), chosen at random. How many can you identify ? You can ask for solutions from drpartha@gmail.com

Who was this mmathematician ?

1. He was a professor of mathematics at Oxford University in England. He studied logic as a vocation, and he played with logic in his writings. His masterpiece book contains stories of little girls and strange creatures, filled with bad puns and other plays with words, absurd implications, contradictions, and numerous and various offenses to common sense. It is as though he were writing his silly stories as much to amuse himself as to entertain his audiences. Adults like you and me, consider this book as sheer nonsense, while children seem to enjoy everything written there. Who was this mathematician ? And what is the nonsensical book we are talking about ?
2. This popular mathematics and popular science writer is considered an authority on the works of the mathematician mentioned in the earlier question. He had a lifelong interest in magic and illusion and was regarded as one of the most important magicians of the twentieth century. He was considered the doyen of American puzzlers. He was a prolific and versatile author, publishing more than a 100 books. He was the brain behind a branch of mathematics nicknamed as ”recreational mathematics ”. His writings on recreational mathematics appeared for twenty-five years in Scientific American, and in his subsequent books collecting them. Who was this mathematician ?

¹<http://drpartha.org.in/publications/mathpeoplemw.pdf>

3. This Professor was an American mathematician, magician, concert pianist, logician, Taoist, and philosopher. He has written many books containing logical and mathematical puzzles one of which is labeled as the “Hardest Logic Puzzle Ever”. Apart from writing about and teaching logic, he has released a recording of his favourite baroque keyboard and classical piano pieces, on the ‘Piano Society website’. Who was this mathematician ?
4. This mathematician later became a Professor of Cognitive Science and Comparative Literature. He is the author of a famous book which is considered by many as the most unreadable and incomprehensible book written in English. The book eventually won two famous awards :: the Pulitzer Prize for general non-fiction and The American Book Award for Science. Who was this mathematician ?
5. This Indian mathematician grew up in pathetic poverty and deprivation. He never had a formal education or training in mathematics, and he landed up in a clerical job. Yet, he found a brilliant mentor in Cambridge, U.K. and made extraordinary contributions to mathematics. On many occasions he did not see eye to eye with his mentor. His non-traditional approach to maths involved claiming that the Goddess of the temple in his home-town gave him solutions to some very complex mathematical problems, through revelations in his dreams. Some of his remarkable discoveries, scribbled in a notebook (consisting of loose and unordered sheets of paper), were found by accident after his death. His discoveries are used in a wide variety of other fields even today, almost a hundred years after his death. Who was this mathematician ?
6. This mathematician never existed, but he has been publishing work for over 80 years, making him one of the most important mathematicians of the last century. He was even baptized, threw his daughter a wedding, is known for his quirky humor, fought back against those that questioned his existence, and had an obituary published upon his alleged death. Several conferences were held in his name, where some most prominent mathematicians had gotten involved. The lucky people who have been invited to spectate these spirited and often chaotic meetings would always come out with the impression that it is a ”gathering of madmen”. Who was this (non-existent) mathematician ?
7. This gifted Indian academic was born in a modest family, as a son of a Police constable in a remote village of India. He was a child prodigy and completed his PhD from the University of California at Berkley.

He joined the University of Washington at Seattle, before returning to India. He taught mathematics at various institutes in India. He was diagnosed with schizophrenia and was admitted to a psychiatric hospital. He went missing during a train journey, and was found years later, very far away from where he boarded the train. He was again admitted to the hospital and later returned to research and teaching in prestigious institutes of India. He was awarded the Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award of India, posthumously in 2020. Who was this mentally unstable genius ?

8. A doctoral candidate at the University of California (USC), Berkeley in 1939, arrived late for his graduate-level statistics class and found two problems written upon the blackboard. Not knowing that they were examples of unsolvable statistical problems, he mistook them for a homework assignment, jotted them down and solved them after a lot of effort and struggle. The equations that he solved are actually more accurately described as unproved statistical theorems, rather than unsolvable problems. His remarkable and seemingly impossible achievement surprised and shocked his teacher. His subsequent discoveries revolutionised mathematics in many ways. He was later decorated with the US National Medal of Science, besides various other awards and recognitions. His story also became the topic of sermons on “Believe in yourself” in the local Church. Who was this late-comer-genius ? What was his major contribution to mathematics ?

Closing remarks

You can get the solutions to this quiz, from the author (drpartha@gmail.com). This article was created by the author, using \LaTeX . The \LaTeX source of this article can be obtained by sending a request to : drpartha@gmail.com. Please mention the Ref. No., and the Vers. code mentioned at the top of this article. As always, your constructive suggestions and remarks are always welcome.

References

- [1] Who is a mathematician ?
<http://drpartha.org.in/publications/mathpeplemw.pdf>
