

Observations on Every Third Digit of the Thue-Morse Sequence

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Abstract

We investigate some interesting properties of the sequence made up of every third term of the Thue-Morse sequence, and consider other similar sequences.

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1 Introduction

The Thue-Morse sequence, or T , can be defined in many ways, and we will use the following definition for the n th digit of the sequence, denoted by $T(n)$:

Definition 1.1 (Thue-Morse Sequence). *The Thue-Morse sequence is the sequence whose n th term $T(n)$ depends on the number of ones in the binary representation of n . If this number is odd, $T(n)$ is 1; otherwise, it is 0.*

The sequence T_3 , which is defined as the sequence whose n th term is $T(3n)$, has some interesting properties that we will investigate – among the most interesting of which are the lengths of runs in the sequence and the persistent imbalance of zeroes and ones.

Theorem 1.1 (Motif Theorem). *Motifs in T_3 are only of lengths 1, 3, 6, 7, or 8.*

Theorem 1.2 (Imbalance Theorem). *The number of zeroes in the first n digits of T_3 always exceeds the number of ones for any $n > 0$.*

We also develop two main techniques to prove these theorems and others – the segment-matching method and its reverse. Newman proved the Imbalance Theorem in [1], but we use our methods to prove it without resorting to analysis. Furthermore, our methods may be extended in the future to investigate T_n , which is defined so that $T_n(x) = T(nx)$.

2 Run-Length Of T_3

2.1 Motifs and the Λ Function

We define *segments*, *runs*, and *motifs* in T_3 as follows:

Definition 2.1. *A segment of length n is n consecutive terms in a sequence.*

Definition 2.2. *A run of length n is a segment of length n , all of whose terms are identical.*

Definition 2.3. *A motif of length n is a run of length n which is not contained inside a run of length $m > n$.*

Similar to the computer science notion of *run-length encoding*, we define a function Λ which takes as input a sequence of integers x and outputs another sequence of integers $\Lambda(x)$ whose n th term is denoted $\Lambda(x)(n)$. It is defined as follows:

- $\Lambda(x)(0)$ is the length of the motif in x starting at $x(0)$.
- $\Lambda(x)(n)$ is the length of the motif starting at the term in x indexed by $\sum_{k=0}^{n-1} \Lambda(x)(k)$.

In other words, Λ takes as input a sequence of numbers and transforms it into a sequence denoting the lengths of motifs in the input.

2.2 $\Lambda(T_3)$

The authors created a computer program to investigate the sequence $\Lambda(T_3)$ and noted that it consists, for all values checked, of only 1, 3, 6, 7, and 8. In other words, length of motifs in T_3 consist of only these values. The rest of Section 2 will be devoted to proving this.

2.3 No-2 Theorem

Theorem 2.1 (No-2 Theorem). *There are no motifs of length 2 in T_3 . Equivalently, $\Lambda(T_3)$ contains no 2s.*

Proof. We begin by observing that a motif of zeroes of length 2 is the sequence 00 surrounded by 1s, and a motif of ones of length 2 is the opposite, except at the beginning of the sequence. However, the sequence T_3 begins with a motif of length 7, so this caveat is not necessary. These translate to 1001 and 0110 in T_3 , which must exist if the No-2 Theorem is false. Because we obtain the elements of T_3 from choosing every third element of the Thue-Morse sequence, the existence of 1001 or 0110 in T_3 implies the existence of $1XX0XX0XX1$ or $0XX1XX1XX0$ in the Thue-Morse sequence where X is either digit.

Lemma 2.1. *The sequences 000 and 111 do not exist in the Thue-Morse sequence.*

Proof. The non-existence of runs of length 3 may be established by [2, Corollary 1], which states that there are no instances of a segment n in the Thue-Morse sequence which intersect with other instances of n . We see without loss of generality that 000 has the sequence 00 overlapping with a different instance of itself, therefore ruling it out. \square

Definition 2.4. \overline{X} is defined as X with all zeros and ones interchanged.

Lemma 2.1 allowed for us to create a computer program to comb through all ten-digit sequences of zeroes and ones, with the constraints that they follow the pattern $0XX1XX1XX0$ and do not contain 000 or 111. The only ten-digit sequences that satisfy these constraints are 0011001010, 0011001100, 0011011010, 0101001010, 0101001100, 0101011010, 0101101010, and 0101101100. We do not check for any occurrences of 1001 in T_3 , (which would follow the pattern $1XX0XX0XX1$ in T) but this is not necessary, as shown by:

Lemma 2.2. *A sequence X exists in the Thue-Morse sequence iff the sequence \overline{X} also exists.*

Proof. Such a sequence X will occur entirely inside the first n digits of the sequence, where n is an arbitrarily large power of 2. The *next* n digits are the same as the first n with 0 and 1 interchanged, so the existence of X in the first block is equivalent to the existence of \overline{X} in the second. \square

(This means that we do not need to check for any occurrences in 1001 because these exist *iff* occurrences of 0110 occur.)

Lemma 2.3. *If n is some power of 2 and the sequence X is not more than n digits long, then if X does not occur in the first $8n$ digits of the Thue-Morse sequence, it never occurs.*

Proof. Call the first n digits of the Thue-Morse sequence A , and \bar{A} (as defined above) B . Then by the same logic as the proof of Lemma 2.2, the first $8n$ digits are $ABBABAAB$. As the sequence n is no more than n digits long, any occurrence of it is either entirely within one n -long block or straddling two. Therefore, the only possible "environments" in which the pattern may occur are A , B , AA , AB , BA , or BB . All of these environments occur in $ABBABAAB$, so if the pattern never exists there, it never exists anywhere. \square

Now, we can conclude the proof of Theorem 2.1. Lemma 2.3 means we only need to check the first 128 digits (as the 10-digit sequences are less than 16 long, so checking 128 is sufficient.) Checking using a simple computer program has ruled these out. \square

2.4 The Segment-Matching Method

Proving the No-2 Theorem left us with some useful tools to tackle future proofs, but the time taken to solve such a proof by brute force will grow exponentially with the length of the segment to check for. In particular, our naive approach to checking for the existence of a segment in T_3 has been to generate the equivalent segment in T that would have created it (such as translating 0110 in T_3 into 0XX1XX1XX0 in T .) The number of possible segments to check in T grows roughly exponentially with the length of the original segment, each one to check being on the order of 3 times the size of the original one. The segment-matching method will reduce checking for a segment of length x in T_3 to checking for at most four segments of length at most x in T .

To begin, we see that the sequence T_3 is made up of blocks of 4, for every n which is a multiple of 4, of $T_3(n)$, $T_3(n+1)$, $T_3(n+2)$, $T_3(n+3)$, which is equal to:

$$T(3n), T(3n+3), T(3n+6), T(3n+9).$$

Remembering that n is a multiple of 4, we will denote $3n/4$ by m , and denote the binary expansion of any number x by $[x]$. In that case, we have the following binary expansions of the four numbers above:

$$\begin{aligned} [3n] &= [m]00, \\ [3n+3] &= [m]11, \\ [3n+6] &= [m+1]10, \\ [3n+9] &= [m+2]01. \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, we know their values in the Thue-Morse sequence by our original definition of it.

$$\begin{aligned} T(3n) &= T(m), \\ T(3n+3) &= T(m), \end{aligned}$$

$$T(3n + 6) \neq T(m + 1),$$

$$T(3n + 9) \neq T(m + 2).$$

This sequence of four values is equivalent to $T_3(n), T_3(n+1), T_3(n+2), T_3(n+3)$ by the definition of the T_3 sequence. Knowing that n is a multiple of 4, then, and therefore that m is a multiple of 3, we see that the T_3 sequence is made up of blocks of length 4 for every multiple of 3 m . Denoting the binary complement of x by \bar{x} , these blocks go:

$$T(m), T(m), \overline{T(m+1)}, \overline{T(m+2)}. \quad (1)$$

Because this segment in T_3 continues every four entries with a new m , for any segment X we wish to check, we need only identify X with a tuple of consecutive elements of the sequence

$$T(m), T(m), \overline{T(m+1)}, \overline{T(m+2)}, T(m+3), T(m+3), \overline{T(m+4)}, \overline{T(m+5)}, \dots \quad (2)$$

For some m which is a multiple of 3. We only need to check four possible tuples – beginning the tuple at the first entry equal to $T(m+3)$ is the same as checking starting at $T(m)$ for a different value of m , so we only need to match up X with a tuple starting at each of the first four entries. In fact, we may need to check fewer than four, because some may be ruled out if two consecutive values in the segment are different but each match up to the same value in the infinite sequence. Removing the overlines and duplicate entries then gives us four sequences in T to check, each of which are at most as long as X .

For example, we can now prove the No-2 Theorem without resorting to brute force.

Proof. Remembering that the No-2 Theorem implies the existence of 0, 1, 1, 0 or 1, 0, 0, 1 in T_3 , we can reason about where these sequences must appear. Because $T_3(4n) = T_3(4n+1)$ for all natural numbers n , we can eliminate any possibility where the first two digits **0110 1001** or the last two digits **0110 1001** are at positions $4n, 4n+1$. Therefore, any 0110 or 1001 sequence would have to begin at position $4n+1$ or $4n+3$. We can make a table for each of the two possibilities, where the first two rows are the direct values in 0110 and 1001 and the last two rows contain the sequence in T we wish to look for. In fact, due to Lemma 2.2, we need only look for 0110.

Case 1 ($4n+1$):

$T(m)$ 0	$\overline{T(m+1)}$ 1	$\overline{T(m+2)}$ 1	$T(m+3)$ 0
$T(m)$ 0	$T(m+1)$ 0	$T(m+2)$ 0	$T(m+3)$ 0

Case 2 ($4n+3$):

$\overline{T(m+2)}$ 0	$T(m+3)$ 1	$T(m+3)$ 1	$\overline{T(m+4)}$ 0
$T(m+2)$ 1	$T(m+3)$ 1		$T(m+4)$ 1

In either case, we have three consecutive entries of the same value in the Thue-Morse sequence, which by Lemma 2.1 never exist. Therefore, No-2 is proven again. \square

2.5 The Motif Theorem

To prove Theorem 1.1, we need to prove that no other kinds of motifs exist. No-2 has been proven, so we will break this into three parts: proving that no motifs of length 4 exist, proving that none of length 5 exist, and proving that none of length 9 or greater exist.

2.5.1 No-4

Theorem 2.2. *There are no motifs of length 4.*

Proof. A counterexample, a motif of length 4, will follow the pattern 011110 or 100001. As we established in the No-2 Theorem proof above, we need only check the first example: 011110. For Case 1 (starting at 0 mod 4):

$T(m)$ 0	$T(m)$ 1	$\overline{T(m+1)}$ 1	$\overline{T(m+2)}$ 1	$T(m+3)$ 1	$T(m+3)$ 0
$T(m)$ 0	$T(m)$ 1	$T(m+1)$ 0	$T(m+2)$ 0	$T(m+3)$ 1	$T(m+3)$ 0

A contradiction is immediately apparent: $T(m)$ may not equal both 0 and 1, so Case 1 is ruled out.

- Case 2 has the sequence starting at 1 mod 4:

$T(m)$ 0	$\overline{T(m+1)}$ 1	$\overline{T(m+2)}$ 1	$T(m+3)$ 1	$T(m+3)$ 1	$\overline{T(m+4)}$ 0
$T(m)$ 0	$T(m+1)$ 0	$T(m+2)$ 0	$T(m+3)$ 1		$T(m+4)$ 1

A sequence of 000 (which starts at $T(m)$) does not exist in Thue-Morse, so Case 2 is also ruled out.

Case 3:

$\overline{T(m+1)}$ 0	$\overline{T(m+2)}$ 1	$T(m+3)$ 1	$T(m+3)$ 1	$\overline{T(m+4)}$ 1	$\overline{T(m+5)}$ 0
$T(m+1)$ 1	$T(m+2)$ 0	$T(m+3)$ 1		$T(m+4)$ 0	$T(m+5)$ 1

Such a subsequence is also impossible. [2, Corollary 1] disallows the segment 10101, as this has 101 overlapping with itself.

- Case 4:

$\overline{T(m+2)}$ 0	$T(m+3)$ 1	$T(m+3)$ 1	$\overline{T(m+4)}$ 1	$\overline{T(m+5)}$ 1	$T(m+6)$ 0
$T(m+2)$ 1	$T(m+3)$ 1		$T(m+4)$ 0	$T(m+5)$ 0	$T(m+6)$ 0

This contains a subsequence of 000, which is not allowed. Therefore, Case 4 is impossible.

As none of the cases 1-4 are possible, we see that no sequence of 011110 may exist. Therefore, no subsequence of 100001 exists either, so No-4 is proven. \square

2.5.2 No-5

Theorem 2.3. *There are no motifs of length 5.*

Proof. Similarly to last time, we need only disprove the existence of a sequence 0111110 in T_3 . We need only check two cases this time: knowing that $T_3(4m) = T_3(4m+1)$, we cannot begin on a number which is 0 mod 4, because the initial 01 would fall across $4m$ and $4m+1$ for some m . We also cannot begin on a number which is 3 mod 4, because the final 10 would fall across $4m$ and $4m+1$. Therefore, we only have two cases to check. In the checking of each one, we first display the sequence 0111110 matched up to the $T(m), \dots$ sequence, and then below we remove overlines and duplicate values to arrive at an actual (hypothetical) sequence in T .

Case 1:

$T(m)$ 0	$\overline{T(m+1)}$ 1	$\overline{T(m+2)}$ 1	$T(m+3)$ 1	$T(m+3)$ 1	$\overline{T(m+4)}$ 1	$\overline{T(m+5)}$ 0
$T(m)$ 0	$T(m+1)$ 0	$T(m+2)$ 0	$T(m+3)$ 1		$T(m+4)$ 0	$T(m+5)$ 1

This implies a sequence of 000 in T , which is not allowed.

Case 2:

$\overline{T(m+1)}$ 0	$\overline{T(m+2)}$ 1	$T(m+3)$ 1	$T(m+3)$ 1	$\overline{T(m+4)}$ 1	$\overline{T(m+5)}$ 1	$T(m+6)$ 0
$T(m+1)$ 1	$T(m+2)$ 0	$T(m+3)$ 1		$T(m+4)$ 0	$T(m+5)$ 0	$T(m+6)$ 0

This again results in a 000 sequence in T , which is not allowed.

Therefore neither case is allowed, so No-5 is proven. \square

2.5.3 No-9+

Theorem 2.4. *There are no motifs of length 9 or greater in T_3 .*

Proof. Proving this requires us only to check for a *run* of length 9 or greater. That is, we need to check for 000000000 or 111111111 (and by Lemma 2.2, only 000000000.) We use the segment-matching method to check all 4 possible cases.

Case 1:

$T(m)$ 0	$T(m)$ 0	$\overline{T(m+1)}$ 0	$\overline{T(m+2)}$ 0	$T(m+3)$ 0	$T(m+3)$ 0	$\overline{T(m+4)}$ 0	$\overline{T(m+5)}$ 0	$T(m+6)$ 0
$T(m)$ 0		$T(m+1)$ 1	$T(m+2)$ 1	$T(m+3)$ 0		$T(m+4)$ 1	$T(m+5)$ 1	$T(m+6)$ 0

As in the proof of Lemma 2.1, we know that the T sequence is composed of 01 and 10, which rules out the sequence 0110110 at any point. This is because the breakdown into such blocks is either $[01][10][11][0]$ or $0[11][01][10]$, both of which contain blocks of 11.

Case 2:

$T(m)$ 0	$\overline{T(m+1)}$ 0	$\overline{T(m+2)}$ 0	$T(m+3)$ 0	$T(m+3)$ 0	$\overline{T(m+4)}$ 0	$\overline{T(m+5)}$ 0	$T(m+6)$ 0	$T(m+6)$ 0
$T(m)$ 0	$T(m+1)$ 1	$T(m+2)$ 1	$T(m+3)$ 0		$T(m+4)$ 1	$T(m+5)$ 1	$T(m+6)$ 0	

This results in the same sequence 0110110 as before, so we see that it is also not possible.

Case 3:

$\overline{T(m+1)}$ 0	$\overline{T(m+2)}$ 0	$T(m+3)$ 0	$T(m+3)$ 0	$\overline{T(m+4)}$ 0	$\overline{T(m+5)}$ 0	$T(m+6)$ 0	$T(m+6)$ 0	$\overline{T(m+7)}$ 0
$T(m+1)$ 1	$T(m+2)$ 1	$T(m+3)$ 0		$T(m+4)$ 1	$T(m+5)$ 1	$T(m+6)$ 0		$T(m+7)$ 1

The sequence 1101101 is also disallowed for the same reason – both possible decompositions into blocks of length 2, which are $1][10][11][01]$ and $[11][01][10][1]$, contain a block of 11.

Case 4:

$\overline{T(m+2)}$ 0	$T(m+3)$ 0	$T(m+3)$ 0	$\overline{T(m+4)}$ 0	$\overline{T(m+5)}$ 0	$T(m+6)$ 0	$T(m+6)$ 0	$\overline{T(m+7)}$ 0	$\overline{T(m+8)}$ 0
$T(m+2)$ 1	$T(m+3)$ 0		$T(m+4)$ 1	$T(m+5)$ 1	$T(m+6)$ 0		$T(m+7)$ 1	$T(m+8)$ 1

This gives the sequence 1011011, which can only be broken into $[10][11][01][1]$ and $1][01][10][11]$, both of which have a 11.

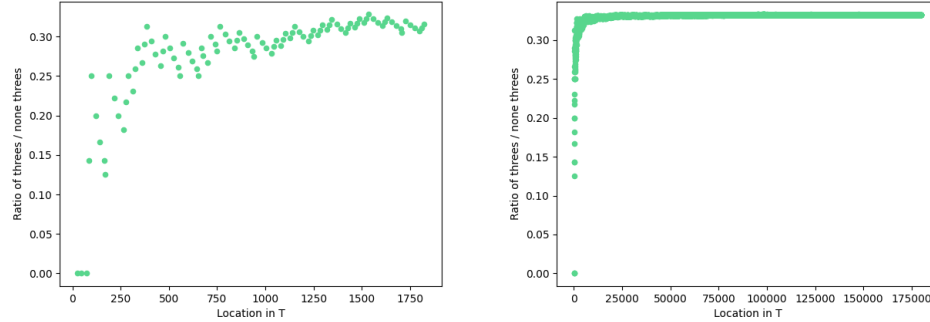
None of the four cases are allowed, so No-9 is proven. \square

2.6 Miscellaneous Remarks

Remark 2.1. *Some run-lengths which are allowed only occur starting at certain remainders of 4. For example, runs of length 8 only occur starting at $2 \bmod 4$. More investigation may be needed to uncover patterns in these.*

Remark 2.2. *We define $\Lambda_1(T_3)$ to be the sequence made of every other entry of $\Lambda(T_3)$ starting at the second element – that is, the series made up of the lengths of motifs in T consisting of the digit 1. Next, we consider the sequence S which is the $\Lambda_1(T_3)$ sequence without any entries other than 6 or 8. In this sequence, 6 and 8 alternate until the location corresponding to the motif starting at entry $87384 \simeq 2^{18}/3$ in T , when two entries of 6 in a row occur. Referring to such a violation of the alternation of 6 and 8 as an anomaly, we observed that the frequency of anomalies slowly increases for the first 10^9 digits but never goes above 0.03% of the total.*

Remark 2.3. *The frequency of the value 3 in $\Lambda_1(T_3)$ and $\Lambda_0(T_3)$ is approximately uniform across the whole function, starting at an arbitrary value leveling out to 0.33 approximately after 10,000 in T .*



3 The Imbalance Of Zeroes And Ones

The T_3 sequence begins 00000001000..., and the imbalance between zeroes and ones continues on. We sampled the ratio of zeroes to ones encountered in every third digit of the first n digits of T itself using a computer program, and found the following:

Ratio for the first 2^{10} digits: 2.8
Ratio for the first 2^{11} digits: 2.1045454545454545
Ratio for the first 2^{12} digits: 2.1045454545454545
Ratio for the first 2^{13} digits: 1.7282717282717284
Ratio for the first 2^{14} digits: 1.7282717282717284
...

Ratio for the first 2^{35} digits: 1.0228080103552828

The ratio does indeed appear to approach 1, but only very slowly – even at over 10^{10} entries of T_3 computed, there are still 2% more zeroes than ones. The ratio does approach 1, but the imbalance between zeroes and ones grows forever.

Definition 3.1. *The imbalance function $d(n)$ is the number of zeroes minus the number of ones found in every third digit of the first n digits of T .*

For example, $d(8) = 3$, because the first eight digits of the Thue-Morse sequence are:

0, 1, 1, 0, 1, 0, 0, 1.

Taking every third digit, we have:

0, 1, 1, 0, 1, 0, 0, 1,

Which has three zeroes and no ones.

3.1 Reversing Segment-Matching

In Section 2, we developed the notion of the segment-matching method, which may be thought of more generally as a *transformation* from a sequence in T_3 to

one or more possible sequences in T which would be its equivalent. However, we can also develop the opposite notion – a transformation from T to T_3 . Of course this is already possible:

$$[0]11[0]10[0]11[0]01[0] \dots \rightarrow 00000 \dots$$

But we can invert the method to obtain a more useful transformation which uses *every* digit in T to create the corresponding sequence in T_3 . We may then apply this transformation to the *whole* of the Thue-Morse sequence to better understand the T_3 sequence itself.

First, we can define three pairs of functions.

Definition 3.2. $\alpha_0(n)$ is the number of zeroes when counting every third element of the first n digits of T , starting on element 0. The number of ones encountered in the same manner is $\alpha_1(n)$.

Definition 3.3. $\beta_0(n)$ is the number of zeroes when counting every third element of the first n digits of T , starting on element 1, and the number of ones when counting in the same manner is $\beta_1(n)$.

Definition 3.4. $\gamma_0(n)$ is the number of zeroes when counting every third element of the first n digits of T , starting on element 2, and the number of ones when counting in the same manner is $\gamma_1(n)$.

Therefore, the imbalance function $d(n)$ is equal to $\alpha_0(n) - \alpha_1(n)$.

We recall that the sequence

$$T_3(n), T_3(n+1), T_3(n+2), T_3(n+3), \dots$$

for any positive integer n which is a multiple of 4, is equivalent to

$$T(m), T(m), \overline{T(m+1)}, \overline{T(m+2)}, T(3), T(3), \overline{T(m+4)}, \overline{T(m+5)}, \dots$$

for $m = 3n/4$. Setting $n = m = 0$, we see that the T_3 sequence itself is equal to:

$$T(0), T(0), \overline{T(1)}, \overline{T(2)}, \dots$$

and so forth.

We now note that the above sequence truncated after the first $4n$ entries, which is the first $4n$ entries in T_3 for some positive integer n , may be reordered as follows:

- Two copies of $T(3k)$ for each $k = 0 \dots n-1$.
- One copy of $\overline{T(3k+1)}$ for each $k = 0 \dots n-1$.
- One copy of $\overline{T(3k+2)}$ for each $k = 0 \dots n-1$.

We can see that the number of zeroes in the first $4n$ digits of T_3 , or $\alpha_0(12n)$, counts each zero in the first $3n$ digits of T twice, assuming said zeroes have indices which are multiples of 3. The number of zeroes at every multiple of 3 in the first $3n$ digits of T is equal to $\alpha_0(3n)$, and going down the rest of the bullet-point list we see that:

$$\alpha_0(12n) = 2 * \alpha_0(3n) + \beta_1(3n) + \gamma_1(3n).$$

Replacing $3n$ with n , we see:

$$\alpha_0(4n) = 2 * \alpha_0(n) + \beta_1(n) + \gamma_1(n)$$

for all n which is a multiple of 12 (as this satisfies the requirement that n is a multiple of 4 from above and that n is a multiple of 3). We also know that n is even, so the total numbers of zeroes in the first n digits of the Thue-Morse sequence is equal to the total number of ones, which are each equal to $n/2$. We can then restate the above expression as:

$$\alpha_0(4n) = 2 * \alpha_0(n) + \frac{n}{2} - \alpha_1(n). \quad (3)$$

Likewise, we have:

$$\alpha_1(4n) = 2 * \alpha_1(n) + \frac{n}{2} - \alpha_0(n). \quad (4)$$

We can subtract these two expressions to get a value for $d(n)$ by Definition 3.1:

Lemma 3.1. *$d(4n) = 3 * d(n)$ for all numbers n which are positive multiples of 12.*

Remark 3.1. *We can use this result to show roughly how fast the ratio of zeroes to ones decays. Let $r(n)$ denote $\alpha_0(n)/\alpha_1(n)$. The total size of $\alpha_0(k) + \alpha_1(k)$ is at most 1 away from $\frac{k}{3}$, so we see that in the limit, $r(4k) - 1 \simeq \frac{3}{4} * (r(k) - 1)$.*

We can generalize Lemma 3.1 to prove an interesting result about the precise decay of the ratio function $r(n)$.

Lemma 3.2. *Equations 3 and 4 are true for all powers of 2.*

Proof. Recalling the notation \overline{X} from Definition 2.4, and the proof of Lemma 2.2, we see that if we denote the first 2^n digits of the Thue-Morse sequence by A , the first 2^{n+2} digits of the sequence are equal to $A\overline{A}\overline{A}A$.

Suppose k is an even power of 2. If we want to determine $\alpha_0(4k)$, we start by counting every third digit of the first block A , giving us $\alpha_0(k)$ zeros. Then, because the block A has a length which is $1 \bmod 3$, when counting every third element we enter the second block \overline{A} starting at the *third* element. Because counting zeros in \overline{A} is equivalent to counting ones in A , and because we are starting at the third element, this block contributes $\gamma_1(k)$ zeros towards the total. Continuing, we see that

$$\alpha_0(4k) = 2 * \alpha_0(k) + \beta_1(k) + \gamma_1(k)$$

and similarly for α_1 . Furthermore, the same result occurs when we assume that k is an *odd* power of two. □

This means that Lemma 3.1 is true for powers of 2.

Lemma 3.3. *$r(n) = r(2n)$ for all n which is an odd power of 2 at least 5.*

Proof. We can start by showing that $r(32) = r(64)$ by computer search, which is indeed true. Next, we see that this implies that $r(128) = r(256)$. By induction, this holds forever after. This is the cause of the odd behavior at the beginning of the section, where any given ratio value appears twice before dropping. □

3.2 Imbalance Theorem

We now have what we need to prove the Imbalance Theorem.

Proof.

Lemma 3.4. *The difference $d(x+n) - d(n)$ has absolute value at most $n/3 + 1$.*

Proof. Because the $\alpha(n)$ functions are defined as the number of zeroes and ones in every third term of the first n terms of the Thue-Morse sequence, going from x to $x+n$ adds at most $n/3 + 1$ terms to consideration, which adds at most $n/3 + 1$ terms to either the zero or the one tally. □

Lemma 3.5. *If $d(x)$ and $d(x+n)$ are both at least m , and $x \leq y \leq x+n$, then $d(y)$ is at least $m - n/6 - 1$.*

Proof. Any point between x and $x+n$ is at most $d/2$ apart from one of x and $x+n$, so by Lemma 3.5 its value must be at most $d/6 + 1$ less than d evaluated at whichever of x and $x+n$ it is closest to, which must by our assumption be at least m . □

Lemma 3.6. *Suppose x is a positive multiple of 12. If $d(n) \geq 5$ for all n such that $x \leq n \leq x+12$, then $d(m) \geq 5$ for all m such that $4x \leq m \leq 4x+48$.*

Proof. Let x be a multiple of 12 such that $d(n)$ evaluated at any point from x to $x+12$ is at least 5. By Lemma 3.1 we know that $d(4x) \geq 15 \leq d(3x+48)$. Then by Lemma 3.5 we know that the minimum value of d between $4x$ and $4x+48$ is at least $15 - (48/6) - 1$, which is greater than 5. □

Lemma 3.7. *Let x be a multiple of 12. If $d(n) \geq 5$ for all n such that $x \leq n \leq 4x$, then $d(m) \geq 5$ for all m such that $4x \leq m \leq 16x$.*

Proof. We see that $d(n) \geq 5$ for all multiples of 12 between x and $4x$, so by applying Lemma 3.6 to $x, x + 12, \dots, 4x - 12$, we see that $d(n) \geq 5$ for all m_1 such that $4x \leq m_1 \leq 4x + 48$, for all m_2 such that $4x + 48 \leq m_2 \leq 4x + 96$, and so forth. \square

To wrap up the proof of the Imbalance Theorem, let x be a multiple of 12 such that $d(n) \geq 5$ for all n such that $x \leq n \leq 4x$. Then by Lemma 3.7 and induction, we have that $d(n) \geq 5$ for all $n \geq x$. Then, by showing $d(n) > 0$ for all $0 < n < x$, we have proven the Imbalance Theorem.

A computer calculation shows that $d(n) \geq 5$ for all n such that $24 \leq n \leq 96$, and that $d(n) > 0$ for all n such that $0 < n < 24$. Therefore, the Imbalance Theorem is proven. \square

References

- [1] Donald Newman, *On the Number of Binary Digits in a Multiple of Three*.
- [2] Jean-Paul Allouche and Jeffrey Shallit, *The ubiquitous Prouhet-Thue-Morse sequence*.