Homework Assignment 10

Matthew Tiger

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Problem 10.5.1. Show that the Cantor set C is a fixed point of the map $F : \mathcal{C}(\mathbb{R}) \to \mathcal{C}(\mathbb{R})$ defined by

$$F(A) = f_1(A) \cup f_2(A)$$

where $f_1(x) = x/3$ and $f_2(x) = x/3 + 2/3$ are contractions on $\mathbb{R}$.

Solution. Recall that the Cantor set C is defined as

$$C = \left\{ x \in [0,1] \ \middle| \ x = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{a_n}{3^n}, \quad a_n \in \{0,2\} \right\}. \tag{1}$$

We wish to show that $F(C) = C$. From the definitions of f_1 and f_2, we have that

$$f_1(C) = \left\{ x \in [0,1] \ \middle| \ x = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{a_n}{3^{n+1}}, \quad a_n \in \{0,2\} \right\}$$

$$= \left\{ x \in [0,1] \ \middle| \ x = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{b_n}{3^n}, \quad b_1 = 0, \ b_n = a_{n-1} \text{ for } n > 1 \right\}$$

$$f_2(C) = \left\{ x \in [0,1] \ \middle| \ x = \frac{2}{3} + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{a_n}{3^{n+1}}, \quad a_n \in \{0,2\} \right\}$$

$$= \left\{ x \in [0,1] \ \middle| \ x = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{b_n}{3^n}, \quad b_1 = 2, \ b_n = a_{n-1} \text{ for } n > 1 \right\} \tag{2}$$

From (2) and the definition of F, we see that

$$F(C) = f_1(C) \cup f_2(C)$$

$$= \left\{ x \in [0,1] \ \middle| \ x = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{b_n}{3^n}, \quad b_n \in \{0,2\} \right\}.$$

But this is precisely the definition of the Cantor set C given in (1). Therefore, $F(C) = C$ and the Cantor set C is a fixed point of F. $\qquad \square$

Problem 10.5.2. Show that the box-counting dimension of the Sierpinski triangle is $\log 3 / \log 2$.

Solution. The Sierpinski triangle is formed by iteratively removing smaller and smaller equilateral triangles from an equilateral triangle of side-length 1. For an equilateral triangle of side-length d, the minimum size square that completely covers the triangle is the square of side-length d.

For the first iteration of the Sierpinski triangle, we remove the open middle equilateral triangle, leaving 3 equilateral triangles of side-length $1/2$. Thus, we would require, at a minimum, 3 squares of side-length $1/2$ in order to completely cover the Sierpinski triangle. In the next iteration, we remove the open middle equilateral triangles of the remaining equilateral triangles, leaving 9 equilateral triangles of side-length $1/4$. Thus, we would, at a minimum, require 9 squares of side-length $1/4$ in order to completely cover the Sierpinski triangle.

In general, the n-th iteration will leave 3^n equilateral triangles of side length $1/2^n$ and we would require, at a minimum, 3^n squares of side-length $1/2^n$ in order to completely cover the Sierpinski triangle. Let K be the Sierpinski triangle and let $N_{\delta_n}(K)$ be the minimum number of boxes of equal length $\delta_n > 0$ needed to completely cover K at iteration n. Then from our previous discussions, $N_{\delta_n}(K) = 3^n$ with $\delta_n = 1/2^n$.

Therefore, the box-counting dimension of the Sierpinski triangle K is

$$\dim(K) = \lim_{\delta \to 0^+} \frac{\log N_\delta(K)}{\log 1/\delta} = \lim_{n \to \infty} \frac{\log N_{\delta_n}(K)}{\log 1/\delta_n} = \lim_{n \to \infty} \frac{\log 3^n}{\log 2^n} = \frac{\log 3}{\log 2}.$$

$\square$

Problem 10.5.4. Let $f(x) = x^2 - a$ with $1 < a < 3$ and let N_f be the corresponding Newton function of f. Show that N_f satisfies the hypothesis of the Contraction Mapping Theorem on $[1, \infty)$. What is the fixed point?

Solution. Recall that the Newton function N_f of a function f is defined by

$$N_f(x) = x - \frac{f(x)}{f'(x)}.$$

If $f(x) = x^2 - a$, then we see that

$$N_f(x) = x - \frac{x^2 - a}{2x} = \frac{x^2 + a}{2x}. \tag{3}$$

The function N_f will satisfy the hypothesis of the Contraction Mapping Theorem on $Y = [1, \infty)$ if (Y, d) is a complete metric space with d the usual metric on $\mathbb{R}$ and if $N_f : Y \to Y$ is a contraction mapping.

Since Y is a closed subset of $\mathbb{R}$, a complete metric space, we know that Y must be a complete metric space. This is since any Cauchy sequence in Y will converge to some point $x \in \mathbb{R}$, but since Y is closed, i.e. it contains all of its limit points, the point x must be in Y.

All that is left is to show that N_f is a contraction mapping, i.e. for all $x, y \in Y$, there is some $\alpha \in (0, 1)$ such that

$$|N_f(x) - N_f(y)| \leq \alpha |x - y|.$$

Note that

$$
\begin{aligned}
|N_f(x) - N_f(y)| &= \left| \frac{x^2 + a}{2x} - \frac{y^2 + a}{2y} \right| \\
&= \left| \frac{x^2 y + ay - xy^2 - ax}{2xy} \right| \\
&= \left| \frac{(x - y)(xy - a)}{2xy} \right| \\
&= \frac{|x - y|}{2} \left| \frac{xy - a}{xy} \right|.
\end{aligned}
$$

Since $a > 1$ we have that $|xy - a| < |xy|$ which implies that $|(xy - a)/xy| \leq 1$. Thus,

$$|N_f(x) - N_f(y)| = \frac{|x - y|}{2} \left| \frac{xy - a}{xy} \right| \leq \frac{1}{2} |x - y|$$

and N_f is a contraction mapping with contraction constant $\alpha = 1/2$. Therefore, N_f satisfies the hypothesis of the Contraction Mapping Theorem on $Y = [1, \infty)$.

By the Contraction Mapping Theorem, the fixed point of N_f is the limit of its iterates. Since N_f is the Newton function, we know that its iterates converge to a root of the function $f(x) = x^2 - a$. Note that the iterates of N_f are positive so they will converge to the positive root of f, i.e. the fixed point of N_f is $p = \sqrt{2}$. $\qquad \square$

Problem 10.5.7.

Solution.   □