

Homework problems #1–4

CSC 341

due January 31, 2007

Problem 1

A string w is *palindromic* if, and only if, it is its own reverse (so that $w = w^{\mathcal{R}}$). Prove by construction that, for every string x over any alphabet A , there are distinct strings w and y over A such that wxy is palindromic. (By “distinct strings,” I mean that $w \neq y$.)

Problem 2

A binary relation R , is *asymmetric* if, and only if, for every x and y in its domain, if xRy , then $\neg yRx$.

Prove by contradiction that no reflexive relation on the domain of natural numbers is asymmetric.

Problem 3

Prove by mathematical induction that, for every positive integer n , the sum of the first n terms of the geometric series $3^0, 3^1, 3^2, \dots$ is $\frac{3^n - 1}{2}$.

Problem 4: For extra credit

Here’s a game for two players, Ahriman and Ormuzd. The equipment consists of an empty urn, an infinite supply of brass spheres, and an engraving tool. To begin the game, Ahriman takes any finite number of brass spheres and engraves on each one a natural number (i.e., a non-negative integer—he may

engrave 0 on any of the spheres, if he likes). He may choose to engrave a different natural number on each sphere, or to repeat a natural number whenever he likes, as many times as he likes. After engraving each sphere, he puts it in the urn.

Then the two players move alternately, as follows: On his turn, Ormuzd chooses any sphere from the urn, reads the number that is on it, and discards it permanently. It will never be returned to the urn. Then, on his turn, Ahriman takes any finite number of new spheres from the supply, engraves on each one a number strictly less than the number that Ormuzd has just read, and then puts it into the urn. Again, Ahriman chooses the natural number to engrave independently for each sphere; he can always repeat or sometimes repeat or never repeat, as he prefers, just so long as every number he engraves is strictly less than the one just read.

Note, however, that if Ormuzd reads the number 0, Ahriman in effect loses his turn: He can't engrave a natural number less than 0 on a sphere, since there is no such natural number, so the finite number of spheres that he adds to the urn in such a case is necessarily 0 (no spheres).

Ormuzd wins the game if the urn is empty when it is his turn to play. Ahriman wins if he can keep the game going forever, that is, if he is never forced to leave Ormuzd an empty urn.

It is obvious that Ormuzd can win if Ahriman plays foolishly (e.g., by putting no spheres into the urn initially, or by engraving a 0 on every sphere that he puts in). If both sides play optimally, however, who wins? Describe a strategy for the winning player and prove that it will win against any opposing strategy.