Lambda calculus (cont)

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(adopted from my & Edward Yang's CSE242 slides)

Logistics

- Assignments:
  - HW 1 is out and due this week (Sunday)
  - There will be one more homework on functions
  - After this: 1 homework / general topic area
- Podcasting: no video while projector is broken
  - Sorry :(
- Come to section and office hours!

Questions

- How are you finding PA1?
  - A: easy, B: okay, C: hard, D: wtf is PA1?

Questions

- How are you finding HW1?
  - A: easy, B: okay, C: hard

Questions

- How are you finding the pace of the lectures?
  - A: too slow, B: it works for me, C:too fast

Today

- Recall syntax of λ calculus
- Semantics of λ calculus
  - Recall free and bound variables
  - Substitution
  - Evaluation order

Review

- λ-calculus syntax: e ::= x | λx.e | e_1 e_2
  - Is λ(x+y).3 a valid term? (A: yes, B: no)
  - Is λx. (x x) a valid term? (A: yes, B: no)
  - Is λx. (x) y a valid term? (A: yes, B: no)

More compact syntax (HW)

- Function application is left associative
  - $e_1\ e_2\ e_3 \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} (e_1\ e_2)\ e_3$
- Lambdas binds all the way to right: only stop when you find unmatched closing paren ‘)’
  - $\lambda x.\lambda y.\lambda z.e \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \lambda x.(\lambda y.(\lambda z.e))$

More on syntax

- Write the parens: λx.x x
  - **A: λx.(x x)**
  - B: (λx.x) x

More on syntax

- Write the parens: $\lambda y.\lambda x.x\ x$ =
  - A: $\lambda y.(\lambda x.x)\ x$
  - **B: $\lambda y.(\lambda x.(x\ x))$**
  - C: $(\lambda y.(\lambda x.x))\ x$

More on syntax

- Is (λy.λx.x) x = λy.λx.x x ?
  - A: yes
  - **B: no**

How do we compute in λ calculus?

How do we compute in λ calculus?

- Substitution!
  - When do we use substitution?
  - What's the challenge with substitution?

Example terms

- Reduce $(\lambda x.(2 + x))\ 5$
- Reduce $(\lambda x.(\lambda y.2)\ 3)\ 5 \rightarrow (\lambda x.\ 2)\ 5 \rightarrow 2$
- Reduce (board): $((\lambda x.(\lambda y.2))\ 3)\ 5 \rightarrow ((\lambda y.2)\ 5) \rightarrow 2$
- Reduce: $(\lambda x.\lambda y.\lambda z.y+3)\ 4\ 5\ 6$

Even more compact syntax

- Can always variables left of the .
  - $\lambda x.\lambda y.\lambda z.e \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \lambda xyz.e$
- This makes the term look like a 3 argument function
  - Can implement multiple-argument function using single-argument functions: called currying (bonus)
- We won't use this syntax, but you may see in the wild

Why is substitution hard?

- What does this reduce to if we do it blindly?
  - let x = a+b in
    let a = 7 in
    x + a
- Recall: let x = e_1 in $e_2 \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} (\lambda x.e_2)\ e_1$
  - Reduce $(\lambda x.\ (\lambda a.\ x + a)\ 7)\ (a+b)$

How do we fix this?

- Renaming!
  - A: rename all free variables
  - B: rename all bound variables

Def: free variables (recall)

- If a variable is not bound by a λ, we say that it is **free**
  - e.g., y is free in λx.(x+y)
  - e.g., x is bound in λx.(x+y)
- We can compute the free variables of any term:
  - FV(x) = {x}
  - FV(λx.e) = FV(e) \ {x}
  - FV(e_1 e_2) = FV(e_1) ∪ FV(e_2)

think: build out!

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  - $x[x:=e] = e$
  - $y[x:=e] = y$ if $y \neq x$
  - $(e_1\ e_2)[x := e] = (e_1[x := e])\ (e_2[x := e])$
  - $(\lambda x.e_1)[x := e] = \lambda x.e_1$
  - $(\lambda y.e_1)[x := e_2] = \lambda y.e_1[x := e_2]$ if $y \neq x$ and $y \notin FV(e_2)$

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    - Why the if? If y is free in e_2 this would capture it!

Lambda calculus: equational theory

- α-renaming or α-conversion
    - $\lambda x.e = \lambda y.e[x:=y]$ where $y \notin FV(e)$
- β-reduction
    - $(\lambda x.e_1)\ e_2 = e_1\ [x:=e_2]$
- η-conversion
    - $\lambda x.(e\ x) = e$ where $x \notin FV(e)$
- We define our $\to$ relation using these equations!

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Today

- Recall syntax of λ calculus ✓
- Semantics of λ calculus ✓
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    - Substitution ✓
    - Evaluation order

Evaluation order

- What should we reduce first in $(\lambda x.x)\ ((\lambda y.y)\ z)$?
  - A: The outer term: $(\lambda y.y)\ z$
  - B: The inner term: $(\lambda x.x)\ z$

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- Does it matter?

Evaluation order

- What should we reduce first in $(\lambda x.x)$ $((\lambda y.y)$ $z)$?
  - A: The outer term: $(\lambda y.y)$ z
  - B: The inner term: $(\lambda x.x)$ z
- Does it matter?
  - No! They both reduce to z!
  - Church-Rosser Theorem: “If you reduce to a normal form, it doesn’t matter what order you do the reductions.” This is known as confluence.

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$=\ \Omega$

Deja vu!

$$\Omega \to \Omega \to \Omega \to \Omega \to \Omega \to \Omega \to \Omega$$

(Ω has no normal form)

Does evaluation order really not matter?

- Consider a function that ignores its argument: $(\lambda x.y)$
- What happens when we call it on Ω?

$(\lambda x.y)\ \Omega$

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$$(\lambda x.y)\ \Omega \longrightarrow y$$

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$$\begin{tikzcd}
 & y \\
(\lambda x.y)\ \Omega \arrow[ur] \arrow[r] & (\lambda x.y)\ \Omega
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\end{tikzcd}
$$

Does evaluation order really not matter?

- Nope! Evaluation order does matter!

Call-by-value

- Reduce function, then reduce args, then apply
  - e_1 e_2
- JavaScript's evaluation strategy is call-by-value (ish)
  - What does this program do?
    - `(x => 33) ((x => x(x)) (x => x(x)))`

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    - `RangeError: Maximum call stack size exceeded`

Call-by-name

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  - It only does what is absolutely necessary!

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Summary

- A term may have many redexes (subterms can reduce)
  - Evaluation strategy says which redex to evaluate
  - Evaluation not guaranteed to find normal form
- Call-by-value: evaluate function & args before β reduce
- Call-by-name: evaluate function, then β-reduce

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Takeaway

- λ-calculus is a formal system
  - "Simplest reasonable programming language" -Ramsey
  - Binders show up everywhere!
    - Know your capture-avoiding substitution!
    - Macros in HW1
    - JavaScript modules in PA1

Bonus: multi-argument λ's

curry.js