Lambda calculus

Functional models of computation

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History

- 1928 - Hilbert's *Entscheidungsproblem* [1]
  - Is there an *algorithm* for deciding whether a proposition in first-order logic is true or false?
- Replacement for set theory as foundation of mathematics
  - 1930 - Combinatory logic (*Curry, Schönfinkel*)
  - 1932 - λ-calculus (*Church*)
  - 1935 - Kleene-Rosser paradox
- Effective computability
  - 1935 - Untyped λ-calculus (*Church, Kleene, Rosser*)
  - 1936 - Turing machine
  - 1936 - Church-Turing thesis
- 1936 - Undecidability of first-order logic
  - Halting problem of Turing machine
  - Equivalence of λ-terms

[1] German for "decision problem"

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  - Equivalence of λ-terms

David Hilbert

- Haskell Curry
- Wilhelm Ackermann
- John von Neumann
- Ernst Zermelo
- ...

Alonzo Church

- Stephen Cole Kleene
- J. Barkley Rosser
- Alan Turing
- Dana Scott
- Michael O. Rabin
- ...

[1] German for "decision problem"

Grammar

$$term ::= \underbrace{var}_{\text{Variable}} \mid \underbrace{(term\ term)}_{\text{Application}} \mid \underbrace{(\lambda var.\, term)}_{\text{Abstraction}}$$

Examples

$$\lambda x.\, x \qquad (\lambda x.\, xx)(\lambda y.\, yy) \qquad \lambda f.\, \lambda x.\, f(fx)$$

Conventions

- Application is left associative

  $abc = (ab)c$
- Abstraction is right associative

  $\lambda x.\, \lambda y.\, x = \lambda x.\, (\lambda y.\, x)$
- Consecutive abstractions can be combined

  $\lambda x.\, \lambda y.\, x = \lambda xy.\, x$

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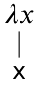
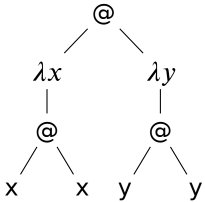
Tree representation

$\lambda x.\, x$



$(\lambda x.\, xx)(\lambda y.\, yy)$



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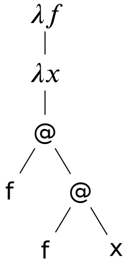


Free and bound variables

Free variables $FV(t)$

Variable: $FV(x) = \{x\}$

Application: $FV(M\,N) = FV(M) \cup FV(N)$

Abstraction: $FV(\lambda x.\,M) = FV(M) \setminus \{x\}$

Bound variables $BV(t)$

Variable: $BV(x) = \varnothing$

Application: $BV(M\,N) = BV(M) \cup BV(N)$

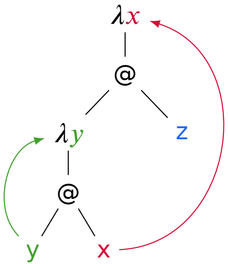
Abstraction: $BV(\lambda x.\,M) = BV(M) \cup \{x\}$

Closed terms

Term t is called closed or combinator if $FV(t) = \varnothing$

Example

$\lambda x.\,(\lambda y.\,yx)z$



Substitution

Substitution $t_{[v:=S]}$

$$x_{[v:=S]} = \begin{cases} S & v = x \\ x & v \neq x \end{cases}$$

$$(M\,N)_{[v:=S]} = (M_{[v:=S]}\ N_{[v:=S]})$$

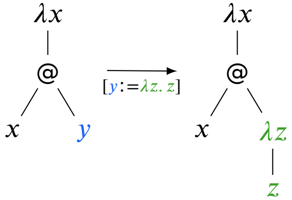
$$(\lambda x.\, M)_{[v:=S]} = \begin{cases} \lambda x.\, M & v = x \\ \lambda x.\, M_{[v:=S]} & v \neq x \end{cases}$$

Safe substitution

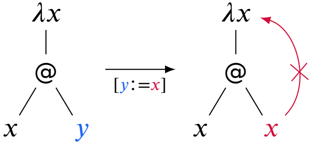
Substitution $t_{[v:=S]}$ is safe if $BV(t) \cap FV(S) = \varnothing$

Example

$$(\lambda x.\, x y)_{[y:=\lambda z.\, z]} = \lambda x.\, x(\lambda z.\, z)$$



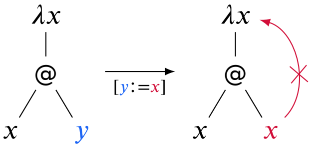
$$(\lambda x.\, x y)_{[y:=x]} = \lambda x.\, x x$$



Renaming

Problem

$$\lambda x.\, x y_{[y := x]} = \lambda x.\, x x$$



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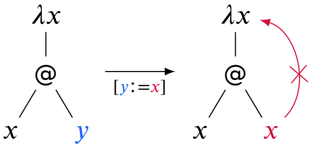
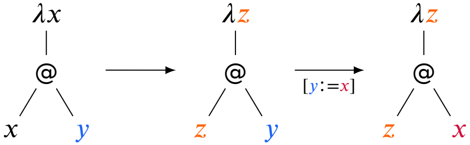


Solution

$$(\lambda x.\, x y)_{[y:=x]} \equiv (\lambda z.\, z y)_{[y:=x]} = \lambda z.\, z x$$



α-equivalence

$$\lambda x.\, M \underset{\alpha}{\equiv} \lambda y.\, M_{[x:=y]} \quad \text{if } x \notin FV(M)$$

$$\lambda x.\, M \underset{\alpha}{\equiv} \lambda x.\, N \quad \text{if } M \underset{\alpha}{\equiv} N$$

$$M\, P \underset{\alpha}{\equiv} N\, P \quad \text{if } M \underset{\alpha}{\equiv} N$$

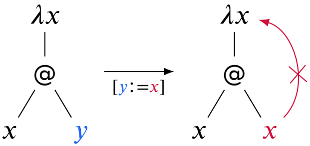
$$P\, M \underset{\alpha}{\equiv} P\, N \quad \text{if } M \underset{\alpha}{\equiv} N$$

Conventions

- λ-terms are considered identical up to α-equivalence
- Appropriate renaming happens implicitly if required during substitution

Problem

$$\lambda x.\, x y_{[y:=x]} = \lambda x.\, x x$$



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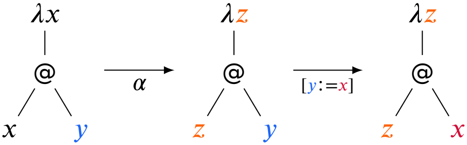

Evaluation

Definitions

- Subterm of form $(\lambda x.\, M)N$ is called β-redex
- Redex $(\lambda x.\, M)N$ can be reduced to $M_{[x:=N]}$
- Reduction of single redex in term M is called β-reduction and denoted as $M \to_\beta M'$
- β-reduction in multiple steps is denoted as $M \twoheadrightarrow_\beta M'$

β-reduction

$$(\lambda x.\, M)N \to_\beta M_{[x:=N]}$$

$$\lambda x.\, M \to_\beta \lambda x.\, N \qquad \text{if } M \to_\beta N$$

$$M\,P \to_\beta N\,P \qquad \text{if } M \to_\beta N$$

$$P\,M \to_\beta P\,N \qquad \text{if } M \to_\beta N$$

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β-reduction

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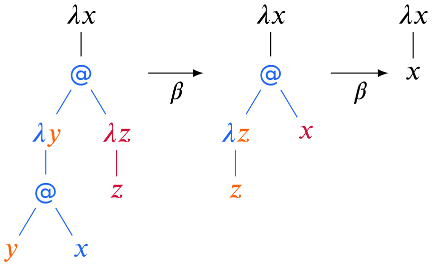
$$P\,M \to_\beta P\,N \qquad \text{if } M \to_\beta N$$

Example

$$(\lambda x.\, (\lambda y.\, yx)(\lambda z.\, z)) \to_\beta$$

$$(\lambda x.\, (\lambda z.\, z)x) \to_\beta$$

$$\lambda x.\, x$$



η-conversion

$$(\lambda x.\, M x) \underset{\eta}{\longleftrightarrow} M \text{ if } x \notin FV(M)$$

Convertibility

Normal order reduction

First Church-Rosser theorem

Second Church-Rosser theorem

Normal order reduction

Recursion

Fixed-point combinator

Curry's Y-combinator

$$Y = \lambda f.\, (\lambda x.\, f(xx))\ (\lambda x.\, f(xx))$$

Turing's Θ-combinator

$$\Theta = (\lambda xy.\, x(xxy))\ (\lambda xy.\, x(xxy))$$

Church-Turing thesis

Undecidability

Programming foundation

Church numerals

Relation to folds

Algebraic data types

Predecessor

Q&A