# Lambda Calculus - Combinators (8A)

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## Fix point (1)

In mathematics, a **fixed point** (**fixpoint**), also known as an **invariant point**, is a value that does <u>not change</u> under a given transformation.

Specifically, for functions, a **fixed point** is an element that is mapped to itself by the function.

Formally,  $\mathbf{c}$  is a fixed point of a function  $\mathbf{f}$  if  $\mathbf{c}$  belongs to both the domain and the codomain of  $\mathbf{f}$ , and  $\mathbf{f}(\mathbf{c}) = \mathbf{c}$ .



c fixed point f(c) = c

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fixed\_point\_(mathematics)

## Fix point (2)

For example, if **f** is defined on the real numbers by

$$f(x) = x^2 - 3x + 4$$

then 2 is a fixed point of f, because f(2) = 2.

Not all functions have fixed points: for example,

f(x) = x + 1, has no fixed points,

since x is never equal to x + 1 for any real number.

In graphical terms, a fixed-point x means the point (x, f(x)) is on the line y = x, or in other words

the graph of **f** has a <u>point</u> in <u>common</u> with that line.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fixed\_point\_(mathematics)

## Extensionality (1)

In logic, extensionality, or extensional equality, refers to <u>principles</u> that <u>judge</u> objects to be equal if they have the <u>same</u> external properties.

It stands in contrast to the concept of intensionality, which is concerned with whether the internal definitions of objects are the <u>same</u>.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extensionality

## Extensionality (2)

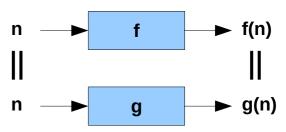
Consider the two functions **f** and **g** mapping from and to natural numbers, defined as follows:

To find  $\mathbf{f(n)}$ , first  $\underline{\text{add}}$  5 to  $\mathbf{n}$ , then  $\underline{\text{multiply}}$  by 2. (n + 5)\*2To find  $\mathbf{g(n)}$ , first  $\underline{\text{multiply}}$   $\mathbf{n}$  by 2, then  $\underline{\text{add}}$  10. 2\*n + 10

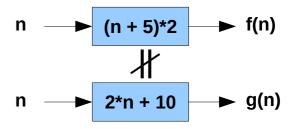
These functions are extensionally equal; given the same input, both functions always produce the same value.

But the <u>definitions</u> of the functions are <u>not equal</u>, and in that <u>intensional</u> sense the functions are not the same.

#### extensionally equal



#### intensionally inequal



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extensionality

## Extensionality (3)

Similarly, in natural language there are many predicates (relations) that are intensionally different but are extensionally identical.

For example, suppose that a town has one person <u>named</u> Joe, who is also the oldest person in the town.

Then, the two predicates "being <u>called Joe</u>", and "being <u>the oldest person</u> in this town" are <u>intensionally distinct</u>, but <u>extensionally equal</u> for the (current) population of this town.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extensionality

#### **Combinatory Logic**

Combinatory logic is a notation

to <u>eliminate</u> the need for <u>quantified variables</u> in <u>mathematical logic</u>.

It was introduced by Moses Schönfinke and Haskell Curry, and has more recently been used in computer science as a <a href="mailto:theoretical model">theoretical model</a> of <a href="mailto:computation">computation</a> and also as a <a href="mailto:basis">basis</a> for the design of <a href="mailto:functional programming">functional programming</a> languages.

It is based on combinators

Without using quantified variables

theoretical model of computation functional programming

combinators

#### Combinator

combinators were introduced by Schönfinkel in 1920 with the idea of providing an <u>analogous way</u>

- to build up functions
- to remove any mention of variables
- particularly in predicate logic.

A combinator is a higher-order function that uses <u>only</u> function application

earlier defined combinators
to <u>define</u> a result from its arguments.

Combinators:

define a result by its argument without free variables

## Combinator Definitions (1)

Combinator: A lambda expression containing no free variables.

While this is the most general definition, the word is usually understood more specifically to refer to certain combinators of special importance, in particular the following <u>four</u>:

$$I = \lambda x . x$$

$$K = \lambda x . \lambda y . x$$

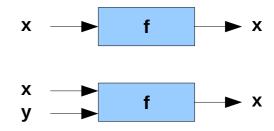
$$S = \lambda x . \lambda y . \lambda z . x(z)(y(z))$$

$$Y = \lambda f . (\lambda u . f(u(u))) (\lambda u . f(u(u)))$$

**Identity** 

Constant function

**Substitution operator** 



https://www.encyclopedia.com/computing/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/combinator

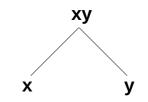
#### Combinator informal description (1-1)

Informally, a tree (xy) can be thought of as a function x applied to an argument y.

When evaluated (i.e., when the function is "applied" to the argument), the tree "returns a value", i.e., <u>transforms</u> into <u>another</u> tree.

The "function", "argument" and the "value" are either combinators or binary trees.

If they are binary trees, they may be thought of as functions too, if needed.





#### Combinator informal description (1-2)

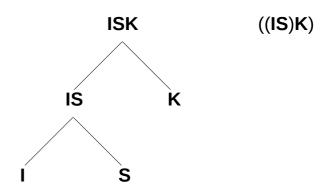
Although the most <u>formal representation</u> of the objects in this system requires <u>binary trees</u>,

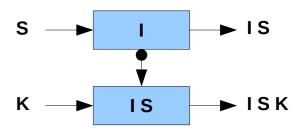
for <u>simpler typesetting</u>

they are often represented as parenthesized expressions, as a <u>shorthand</u> for the tree they represent.

Any subtrees may be parenthesized, but often only the <u>right-side</u> subtrees are parenthesized, with <u>left associativity</u> implied for any <u>unparenthesized applications</u>.

For example, ISK means ((IS)K).

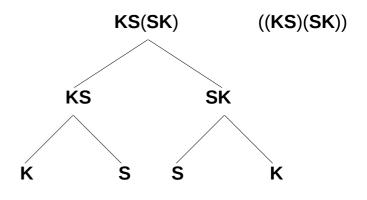


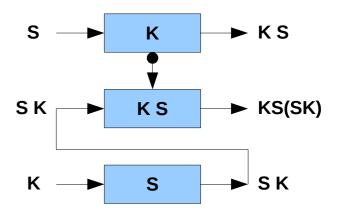


#### Combinator informal description (1-3)

a tree whose left subtree is the tree KS and whose right subtree is the tree SK can be written as KS(SK).

If more explicitness is desired, the implied parentheses can be included as well: ((KS)(SK)).





#### I combinator

The evaluation operation is defined as follows:

x, y, and z represent expressionsmade from the functions S, K, and I, and set values:

I returns its argument:

$$Ix = x$$

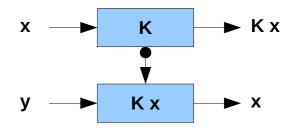


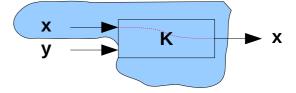
#### K combinator

**K**, when applied to any argument **x**, yields a one-argument constant function **K x**, which, when applied to any argument **y**, returns **x**:

$$K x y = x$$







https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SKI\_combinator\_calculus

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#### **S** combinator

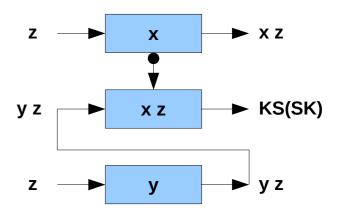
**S** is a substitution operator.

takes three arguments  $(x \ y \ z)$ returns the result of  $x \ z$  applied to the result of  $y \ z$ 

the first argument (**x**) applied to the third (**z**), which is then applied to the result of the second argument (**y**) applied to the third (**z**).

$$S \times y z = x z (y z)$$





a function of x z with the argument y z a function of x with the argument z a function of y with the argument z

#### Combinator informal description (3-1)

**SKSK** evaluates to **KK(SK)** by the **S-rule**.

Then if we evaluate **KK**(**SK**), we get **K** by the **K-rule**.

As no further rule can be applied, the computation halts here.

For all trees  $\mathbf{x}$  and all trees  $\mathbf{y}$ ,

**SKxy** will always evaluate to y in two steps, Ky(xy) = y,

so the ultimate result of evaluating SKxy

will always equal the result of evaluating **y**.

We say that  $\mathbf{SKx}$  and  $\mathbf{I}$  are "functionally equivalent" for any  $\mathbf{x}$  because they always yield the same result when applied to any  $\mathbf{y}$ .

$$S \times y = x \times (y \times z)$$
 S-rule

$$K(x)$$
 y = x K-rule

$$KK(SK) = K$$

$$SK \times y = Ky(xy) = y$$

$$Iy = y$$

## Combinator informal description (3-2)

it can be shown that SKI calculus is <u>not</u> the <u>minimum system</u> that can fully perform the computations of <u>lambda calculus</u>,

as all occurrences of I in any expression can be replaced by (SKK) or (SKS) or (SK x) for any x, and the resulting expression will yield the same result.

So the "I" is merely syntactic sugar.

Since I is <u>optional</u>, the system is also referred as SK calculus or

SK combinator calculus.

$$Iy = y$$

$$Iy = y$$

$$SK \times y = K(y)(x y) = y$$

$$Iy = y$$

#### Combinator informal description (4-1)

It is possible to define a complete system using only one (improper) combinator.

An example is Chris Barker's iota combinator, which can be expressed in terms of **S** and **K** as follows:

IX = XSK

## Combinator informal description (4-1)

It is possible to reconstruct **S**, **K**, and **I** from the iota combinator.

Applying  $\mathbf{I}$  to itself gives  $\mathbf{II} = \mathbf{ISK} = \mathbf{SKK} = \mathbf{SK(KK)}$  which is functionally equivalent to  $\mathbf{I}$ .

$$Ix = xSK$$

$$II = ISK$$

$$II = (IS)K = (SSK)K = SK(KK)$$

$$II y = ISKy = SK(KK)y = Ky(KK)y = y$$



$$II = ISK$$
 and  $IS = SSK$ 

$$(IS)K = (SSK)K$$

$$KK(KK) = K$$

II 
$$y = ISKy = SK(KK)y = Ky(KK)y = y$$

$$SK \times y = K(y)(x y) = y$$

$$Iy = y$$

#### Combinator informal description (4-2)

```
K can be constructed by applying \iota twice to I (= \iota\iota) (which is equivalent to application of \iota to itself):
```

$$\iota(\iota(\iota\iota)) = \iota(\iota\iota SK) = \iota(ISK) = \iota(SK) = SKSK = K.$$

$$IX = XSK$$

$$II = ISK$$

$$II = (IS)K = (SSK)K = SK(KK)$$

#### Combinator informal description (4-3)

**K** can be constructed by applying  $\iota$  twice to I (=  $\iota\iota$ ) (which is equivalent to application of  $\iota$  to itself):

$$\iota(\iota(\iota\iota)) = \iota(\iota\iota SK) = \iota(ISK) = \iota(SK) = SKSK = K.$$

Applying I one more time to I(I(II)) gives

$$I(I(I(II))) = IK = KSK = S.$$

```
IX = xSK

II = ISK

IS = SSK

II = (IS)K = (SSK)K = SK(KK)

I(I(II)) = I(IISK)

= I(ISK)

= I(SK)

= I(SK)
```

#### Improper Combinator

Improper combinators, meaning that they are expressed in terms of other combinators rather than pure abstractions.

To be precise: in lambda calculus a proper combinator is an expression of the form  $(\lambda.x_1x_2...P(x_1,x_2,...))$ , where  $P(x_1,x_2,...)$  only has  $x_1, x_2$  etc. as free variables, and does not contain any abstractions.

So for example,  $(\lambda xyz.x(zz))$  is a proper combinator, but  $(\lambda x.x(\lambda y.y))$  is not, because it contains x applied to a lambda term.

https://cs.stackexchange.com/questions/57507/basis-sets-for-combinator-calculus

## Combinator Definitions (2)

The combinators I, K, and S were introduced by Schönfinkel and Curry, who showed that any  $\lambda$ -expression can essentially be formed by combining them.

More recently combinators have been applied to the design of implementations for functional languages.

In particular **Y** (also called the paradoxical combinator) can be seen as producing fixed points, since **Y(f)** reduces to **f(Y(f))**.

 $I = \lambda x . x$   $K = \lambda x . \lambda y . x$   $S = \lambda x . \lambda y . \lambda z . x(z)(y(z))$   $Y = \lambda f . (\lambda u . f(u(u))) (\lambda u . f(u(u)))$ 

https://www.encyclopedia.com/computing/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/combinator

#### Combinatory Logic and Lambda Calculus (1)

Lambda calculus is concerned with <u>objects</u> called <u>lambda-terms</u>, which can be <u>represented</u> by the following <u>three forms</u> of <u>strings</u>:

```
V
\lambda V. E_1
(E_1 E_2)
```

where  $\mathbf{v}$  is a variable name drawn from a predefined <u>infinite set</u> of <u>variable names</u>, and  $\mathbf{E_1}$  and  $\mathbf{E_2}$  are <u>lambda-terms</u>.

#### Combinatory Logic and Lambda Calculus (2)

Terms of the form  $\lambda v$ .  $E_1$  are called abstractions.

The variable  $\mathbf{v}$  is called the formal parameter of the abstraction, and  $\mathbf{E}_1$  is the body of the abstraction.

The term  $\lambda v. E_{_1}$  represents the function

applied to an argument,

binds the formal parameter **v** to the argument

computes the resulting value of E,

<u>returns</u>  $\mathbf{E}_{1}$ , with every occurrence of  $\mathbf{v}$  <u>replaced</u> by the <u>argument</u>.

٧

λv. E<sub>1</sub>

 $(E_1 E_2)$ 

## Combinatory Logic and Lambda Calculus (3-1)

Terms of the form  $(\mathbf{E}_1 \ \mathbf{E}_2)$  are called **applications**.

applications <u>model</u> function invocation or execution: the function represented by  $\mathbf{E_1}$  is to be <u>invoked</u>, with  $\mathbf{E_2}$  as its <u>argument</u>, and the <u>result</u> is computed.

#### Combinatory Logic and Lambda Calculus (3-2)

If **E**<sub>1</sub> (the applicand) is an abstraction, the term may be reduced:

 $\mathbf{E_2}$ , the argument, may be <u>substituted</u> into the <u>body</u> of  $\mathbf{E_1}$  in place of the <u>formal parameter</u>  $\mathbf{v}$  of  $\mathbf{E_1}$ , and the result is a <u>new lambda term</u> which is equivalent to the old one.

If a lambda term contains <u>no</u> subterms of the form  $((\lambda v. E_1) E_2)$  then it cannot be reduced, and is said to be in <u>normal form</u>.

#### Combinatory Logic and Lambda Calculus (4)

The motivation for this <u>definition</u> of <u>reduction</u> is that it <u>captures</u> the <u>essential behavior</u> of all <u>mathematical functions</u>.

For example, consider the function that computes the square of a number. We might write

The **square** of x is x \* x (using \* to indicate multiplication.)

**x** here is the formal parameter of the function.

To <u>evaluate</u> the **square** for a particular <u>argument</u>, say 3, we insert it into the definition in place of the formal parameter:

The square of 3 is 3 \* 3

#### Combinatory Logic and Lambda Calculus (5)

To <u>evaluate</u> the resulting expression **3 \* 3**, we would have to resort to our knowledge of <u>multiplication</u> and the <u>number</u> **3**.

Since any <u>computation</u> is simply a <u>composition</u> of the <u>evaluation</u> of suitable <u>functions</u> on suitable <u>primitive</u> arguments,

this simple substitution principle suffices to capture the <u>essential mechanism</u> of <u>computation</u>.

#### Combinatory Logic and Lambda Calculus (6)

Moreover, in lambda calculus, notions such as '3' and '\*' can be represented without any need for externally defined primitive operators or constants.

It is possible to identify terms in lambda calculus, which, when suitably <u>interpreted</u>, behave like the <u>number</u> **3** and like the <u>multiplication operator</u> \*, q.v. Church encoding.

#### Combinatory Logic and Lambda Calculus (7)

Lambda calculus is known to be computationally equivalent in power to many other plausible <u>models</u> for <u>computation</u> (including <u>Turing machines</u>);

that is, any <u>calculation</u> that can be accomplished in any of these other <u>models</u> can be expressed in <u>lambda calculus</u>, and vice versa.

According to the Church-Turing thesis, both <u>models</u> can express any possible <u>computation</u>.

#### Combinatory Logic and Lambda Calculus (8-1)

lambda-calculus can <u>represent</u> any conceivable <u>computation</u> using only the simple notions

of function abstraction and application

based on simple textual substitution of terms for variables.

abstraction is <u>not</u> even required.

Combinatory logic is

a <u>model</u> of <u>computation</u> <u>equivalent</u> to <u>lambda calculus</u>, but <u>without abstraction</u>.

#### Combinatory Logic and Lambda Calculus (8-2)

#### Combinatory logic is

a <u>model</u> of <u>computation</u> <u>equivalent</u> to <u>lambda calculus</u>, but <u>without abstraction</u>.

The advantage of this is that <a href="mailto:evaluating expressions">evaluating expressions</a> in lambda calculus is quite <a href="mailto:complicated">complicated</a> because the <a href="mailto:semantics">semantics</a> of <a href="mailto:substitution">substitution</a> must be <a href="mailto:specified">specified</a> with great care to <a href="mailto:avoid variable capture">avoid variable</a> capture problems.

<u>evaluating expressions</u> in <u>combinatory logic</u> is much <u>simpler</u>, because there is no notion of <u>substitution</u>.

#### **Combinatory Calculus**

abstraction is the only way to <u>manufacture</u> functions in the lambda calculus

Instead of abstraction,
combinatory calculus provides a <u>limited</u> set of primitive functions
out of which other functions may be built.

## Combinatory Terms (1)

Syntax	Name	Description
X	Variable	A character or string representing a combinatory term.
Р	Primitive function	One of the combinator symbols I, K, S.
(M N)	Application	Applying a function to an argument. <b>M</b> and <b>N</b> are combinatory terms.

# Combinatory Terms (2)

The primitive functions are combinators, or functions that, when seen as lambda terms, contain <u>no</u> free variables.

To shorten the notations, a general convention is that  $(E_1 E_2 E_3 \dots E_n)$ , or even  $E_1 E_2 E_3 \dots E_n$ , denotes the term  $(\dots ((E_1 E_2) E_3) \dots E_n)$ .

This is the same general convention (left-associativity) as for multiple application in lambda calculus.

## Reductions in Combinatory Logic

In combinatory logic, each primitive combinator comes with a reduction rule of the form

$$(P x_1 ... x_n) = E$$

where **E** is a term mentioning only variables from the set  $\{x_1 \dots x_n\}$ .

It is in this way that primitive combinators behave as functions.

# Examples of Combinators (1-1)

The simplest example of a combinator is I, the identity combinator, defined by

$$(I x) = x$$
 for all terms x.

## Examples of Combinators (1-2)

Another simple combinator is K,

which manufactures constant functions:

(K x) is the function which, for any argument, returns x, so we say

$$((K x) y) = x$$
 for all terms x and y.

Or, following the convention for multiple application,

$$(K \times y) = x$$

## Examples of Combinators (2-1)

A third combinator is **S**, which is a generalized version of application:

$$(S \times y z) = (x z (y z))$$

S <u>applies</u> x to y after first <u>substituting</u> z into each of them (x and y)

**x** is <u>applied</u> to **y** inside the <u>environment</u> **z**.

## Examples of Combinators (2-2)

```
Given S and K, I itself is unnecessary, since it can be built from the other two:
```

for any term x.

## Examples of Combinators (3-1)

Note that although ((S K K) x) = (I x) for any x, (S K K) itself is <u>not</u> equal to I.

We say the terms are extensionally equal.

Extensional equality captures the <u>mathematical notion</u> of the equality of functions:

that two functions are equal

if they always <u>produce</u> the <u>same results</u> for the <u>same arguments</u>.

## Examples of Combinators (3-2)

In contrast, the terms themselves, together with the reduction of primitive combinators, capture the notion of intensional equality of functions:

that two functions are <u>equal</u>
<a href="mailto:only if">only if</a> they have identical implementations
<a href="mailto:up to">up to</a> the <u>expansion</u> of <u>primitive combinators</u>.

## Examples of Combinators (3-3)

There are <u>many ways</u> to <u>implement</u> an <u>identity function</u>; **(S K K)** and **I** are among these ways.

**(S K S)** is yet another.

We will use the word <u>equivalent</u> to indicate <u>extensional</u> equality, <u>reserving equal</u> for <u>identical</u> combinatorial terms.

# Examples of Combinators (4)

A more interesting combinator is

the fixed point combinator or Y combinator,

which can be used to implement recursion.

## Fix-point combinator (1)

In combinatory logic for computer science,

a **fixed-point combinator** (or fixpoint combinator), denoted fix, is a higher-order function (which takes a function as argument) that returns some fixed point (a value that is mapped to itself) of its argument function, if one exists.

Formally, if the function f has one or more fixed points, then fix f = f(fix f),

and hence, by repeated application,

$$fix f = f (f (... f (fix f) ...))$$

## Fix-point combinator (1111)

Every recursively defined function can be seen as a fixed point of some suitably defined function closing over the recursive call with an extra argument,

and therefore, using Y, every recursively defined function can be expressed as a lambda expression.

In particular, we can now cleanly define the subtraction, multiplication and comparison predicate of natural numbers recursively.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lambda\_calculus#Formal\_definition

# Fix-point combinator (3-1)

In the classical untyped lambda calculus, every function has a fixed point.

A particular implementation of fix is Curry's paradoxical combinator Y, represented by

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

In functional programming, the Y combinator can be used to formally define recursive functions in a programming language that does not support recursion.

## Fix-point combinator (3-2)

This combinator may be used in implementing **Curry's paradox**.

The heart of Curry's paradox is that <u>untyped lambda calculus</u> is <u>unsound</u> as a <u>deductive system</u>, and the **Y combinator** demonstrates this by <u>allowing</u> an <u>anonymous expression</u>

This is inconsistent in mathematical logic.

to represent **zero**, or even many **values**.

## Fix-point combinator (4)

Every recursively defined function can be seen as a fixed point of some suitably defined function closing over the recursive call with an extra argument,

and therefore, using Y, every recursively defined function can be expressed as a lambda expression.

In particular, we can now cleanly define the subtraction, multiplication and comparison predicate of natural numbers recursively.

## Fix-point combinator (5)

Applied to a function with one variable,

the Y combinator usually does not terminate.

More interesting results are obtained

by applying the Y combinator to functions of two or more variables.

The additional variables may be used as a counter, or index.

The resulting function behaves like a while or a for loop in an imperative language.

## Fix-point combinator (6)

Used in this way, the Y combinator implements simple recursion.

In the lambda calculus, it is not possible to refer to the definition of a function inside its own body by name.

Recursion though may be achieved by obtaining the same function passed in as an argument, and then using that argument to make the recursive call, instead of using the function's own name, as is done in languages which do support recursion natively.

The Y combinator demonstrates this style of programming.

# Fix-point combinator (7)

An example implementation of Y combinator in two languages is presented below.

# Y Combinator in Python

Y=lambda f: (lambda x: f(x(x)))(lambda x: f(x(x)))

Y(Y)

#### References

- [1] ftp://ftp.geoinfo.tuwien.ac.at/navratil/HaskellTutorial.pdf
- [2] https://www.umiacs.umd.edu/~hal/docs/daume02yaht.pdf