

# Symbolic AI

Andre Freitas



Photo by Vasilyev Alexandr

# Acknowledgements

- Based on the great slides of:
  - Yoav Artzi, Nicholas FitzGerald and Luke Zettlemoyer, Semantic Parsing with Combinatory Categorical Grammars
  - Combinatory Categorical Grammar: Constraining surface realisation in OpenCCG

# This Lecture

- The connection between language, sets and logic
- Semantic Parsing
- Combinatory Categorical Grammars (CCGs)
- How to query KBs using NL

# Language to Meaning

at the chair, move forward three steps past the sofa

$$\lambda a. pre(a, \iota x. chair(x)) \wedge move(a) \wedge len(a, 3) \wedge dir(a, forward) \wedge past(a, \iota y. sofa(y))$$

$$f : \text{sentence} \rightarrow \text{logical form}$$

# Lambda Calculus

- Formal system to express computation
- Allows high-order functions

$\lambda a. \text{move}(a) \wedge \text{dir}(a, \text{LEFT}) \wedge \text{to}(a, \lambda y. \text{chair}(y)) \wedge$   
 $\text{pass}(a, \lambda y. \text{sofa}(y) \wedge \text{intersect}(\lambda z. \text{intersection}(z), y))$

# Lambda Calculus

## Base Cases

- Logical constant
- Variable
- Literal
- Lambda term

# Lambda Calculus

## Logical Constants

- Represent objects in the world

*NYC, CA, RAINIER, LEFT, ...*

*located\_in, depart\_date, ...*

# Lambda Calculus

## Variables

- Abstract over objects in the world
- Exact value not pre-determined

$x, y, z, \dots$



# Lambda Calculus

## Literals

- Represent function application

*city(AUSTIN)*

*located\_in(AUSTIN, TEXAS)*

# Lambda Calculus

## Lambda Terms

- Bind/scope a variable
- Repeat to bind multiple variables

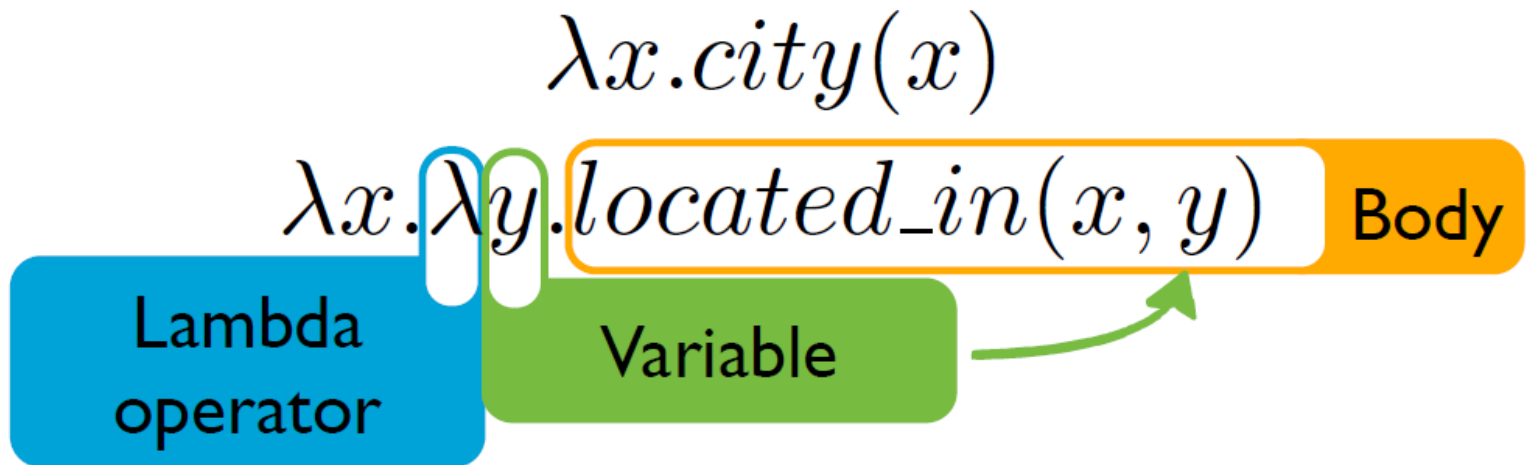
$\lambda x.city(x)$

$\lambda x.\lambda y.located\_in(x, y)$

# Lambda Calculus

## Lambda Terms

- Bind/scope a variable
- Repeat to bind multiple variables



# Capturing Meaning with Lambda Calculus

State		
Abbr.	Capital	Pop.
AL	Montgomery	3.9
AK	Juneau	0.4
AZ	Phoenix	2.7

Border	
State1	State2
WA	OR
WA	ID
CA	OR
CA	NV
CA	AZ

Mountains	
Name	State
Bianca	CO
Antero	CO
Rainier	WA
Shasta	CA
Wrangel	AK
Sil	
Ro	

Show me mountains in states bordering Texas



[Zettlemoyer and Collins 2005]

# Capturing Meaning with Lambda Calculus

**SYSTEM** how can I help you ?

**USER** i ' d like to fly to new york

**SYSTEM** flying to new york . leaving what city ?

**USER** from boston on june seven with american airlines

**SYSTEM** flying to new york . what date would you like to depart boston ?

**USER** june seventh

**SYSTEM** do you have a preferred airline ?

**USER** american airlines

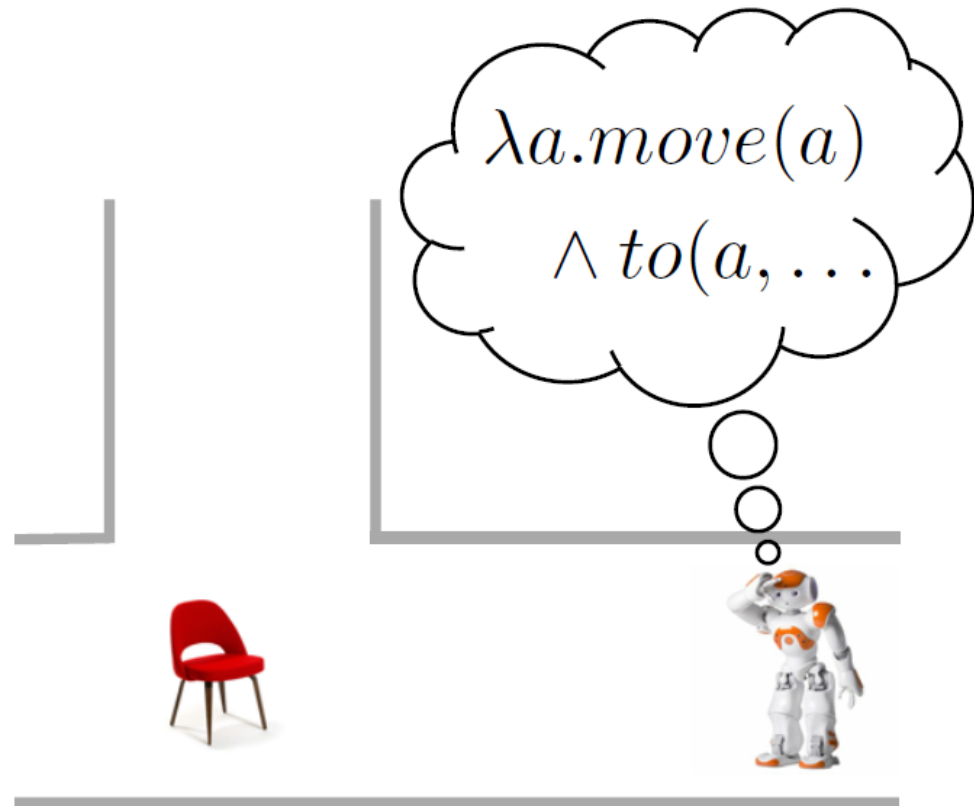
**SYSTEM** o . k . leaving boston to new york on june seventh flying with american airlines . where would you like to go to next ?

**USER** back to boston on june tenth

[CONVERSATION CONTINUES]

# Capturing Meaning with Lambda Calculus

go to the chair  
and turn right



# Capturing Meaning with Lambda Calculus

- Flexible representation.
- Can capture full complexity of natural language.

# Constructing Lambda Calculus Expressions

at the chair, move forward three steps past the sofa

Semantic Parsing


$$\lambda a. pre(a, \iota x. chair(x)) \wedge move(a) \wedge len(a, 3) \wedge dir(a, forward) \wedge past(a, \iota y. sofa(y))$$



# Combinatory Categorical Grammars

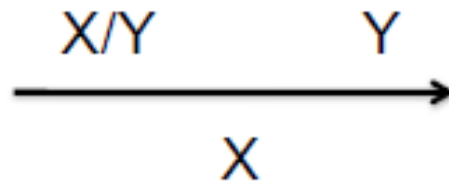
- Categorical formalism.
- Transparent interface between syntax and semantics.
- Designed with computation in mind.

# Combinatory Categorical Grammars

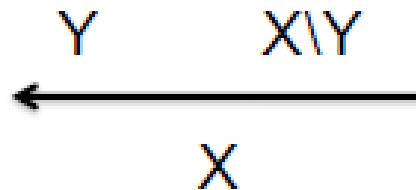
$CCG$	is	fun
$NP$	$S \backslash NP / ADJ$	$ADJ$
$CCG$	$\lambda f. \lambda x. f(x)$	$\lambda x. fun(x)$
	$S \backslash NP$	
	$\lambda x. fun(x)$	
	$S$	
	$fun(CCG)$	

# Formalism

- $X/Y$ : The kind of word or phrase that **combines** with a **following**  $Y$  to form an  $X$ .

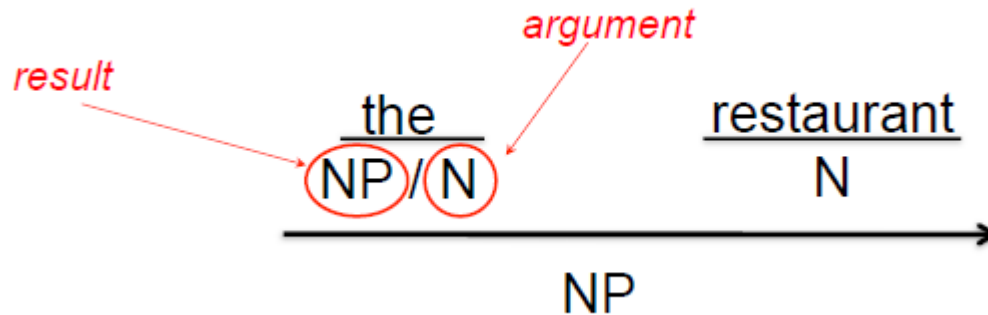


- $X\backslash Y$ : kind of word or phrase that combines with a **preceding**  $Y$  to form an  $X$ .



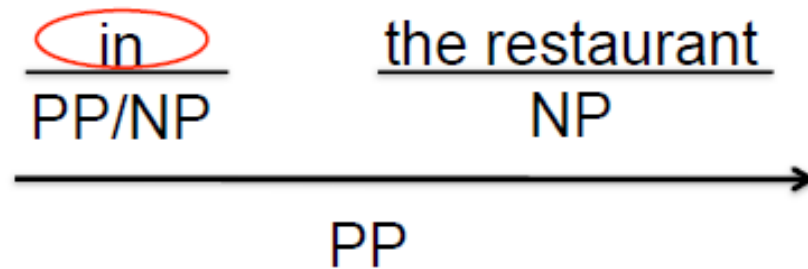
# Determiners

- **Determiner:** word that combines with a following N to give an NP, i.e., an NP/N.

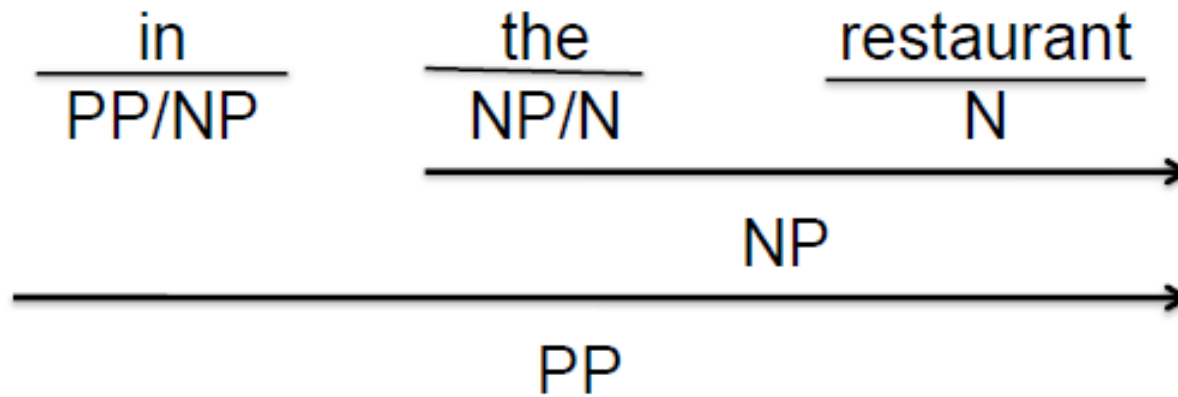


# Prepositions

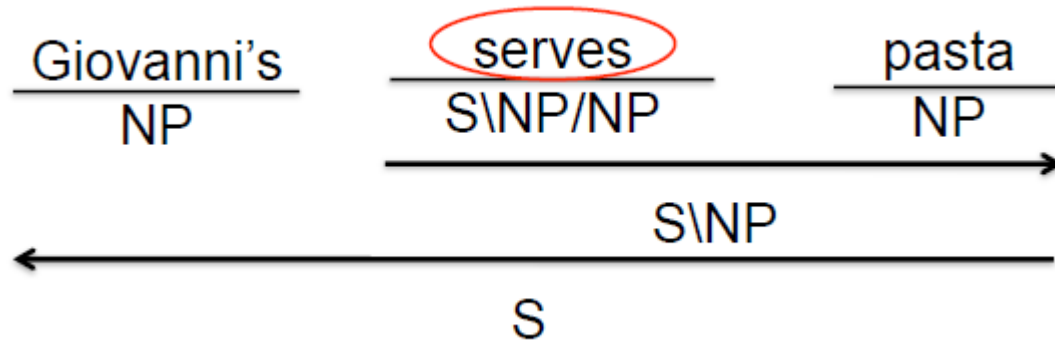
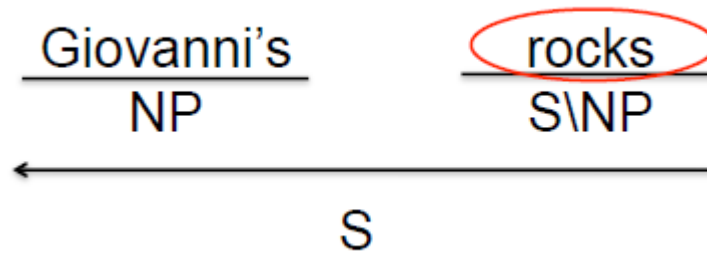
- **Preposition:** word that combines with a following NP to give a PP, i.e., a PP/NP.



# Derivation



# Verbs



# CCG Categories

*ADJ* :  $\lambda x. fun(x)$

- Basic building block.
- Capture syntactic and semantic information jointly.



# CCG Categories

Syntax

*ADJ*

$\lambda x. fun(x)$

Semantics

- Basic building block.
- Capture syntactic and semantic information jointly.

# CCG Categories

Syntax

$ADJ : \lambda x. fun(x)$

$(S \backslash NP) / ADJ : \lambda f. \lambda x. f(x)$

$NP : CCG$

- Primitive symbols: N, S, NP, ADJ and PP.
- Syntactic combination operator (/,\).
- Slashes specify argument order and direction.

# CCG Categories

$ADJ : \lambda x. fun(x)$  Semantics

$(S \setminus NP) / ADJ : \lambda f. \lambda x. f(x)$

$NP : CCG$

- $\lambda$ -calculus expression.
- Syntactic type maps to semantic type.

# CCG Lexical Entries

$\text{fun} \vdash \text{ADJ} : \lambda x. \text{fun}(x)$

# CCG Lexical Entries



# CCG Lexicons

fun  $\vdash ADJ : \lambda x. fun(x)$

is  $\vdash (S \setminus NP) / ADJ : \lambda f. \lambda x. f(x)$

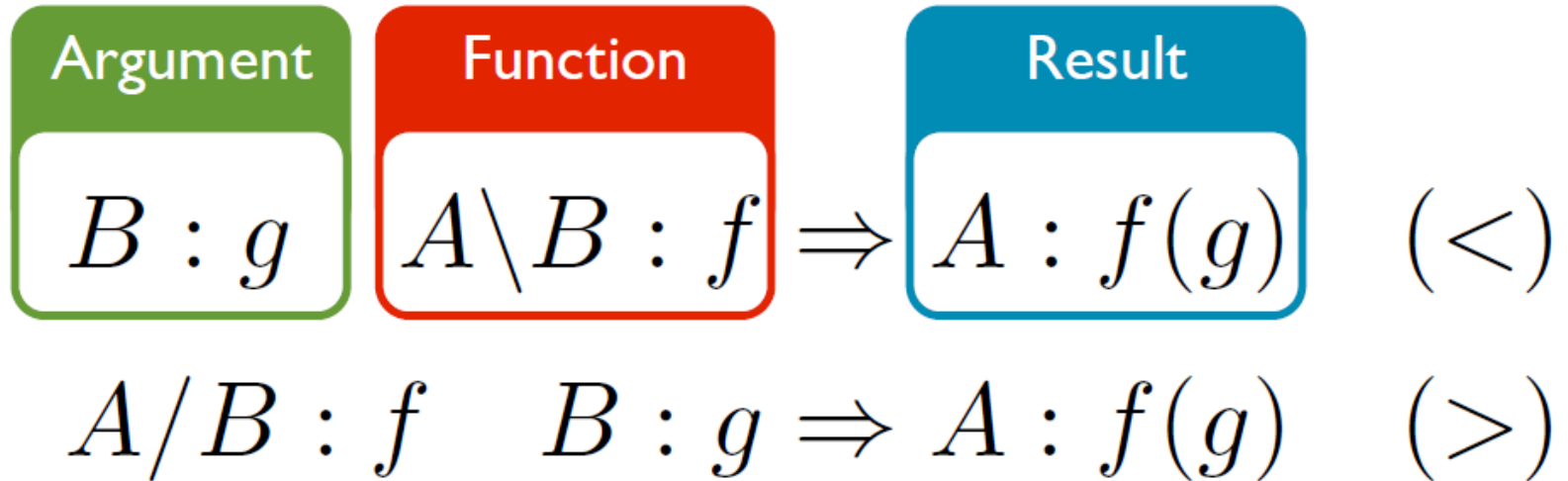
CCG  $\vdash NP : CCG$

# Parsing with CCGs

CCG	is	fun
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<i>NP</i>	<i>S \ NP / ADJ</i>	<i>ADJ</i>
<i>CCG</i>	$\lambda f. \lambda x. f(x)$	$\lambda x. fun(x)$

# CCG Operations

## Application



- Equivalent to function application
- Two directions: forward and backward
  - Determined by slash direction



# Parsing with CCGs

CCG	is	fun
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<i>NP</i>	<i>S \ NP / ADJ</i>	<i>ADJ</i>
<i>CCG</i>	$\lambda f. \lambda x. f(x)$	$\lambda x. fun(x)$

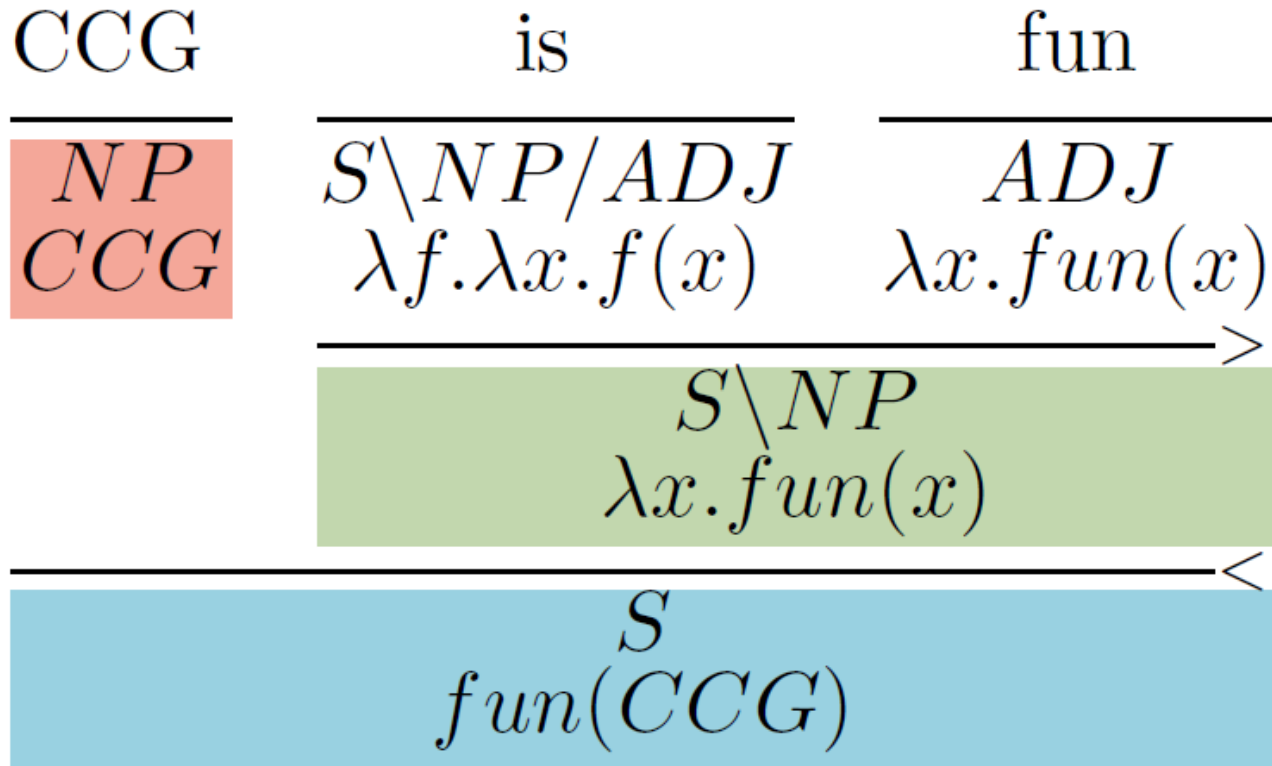
# Parsing with CCGs

CCG	is	fun
<i>NP</i>	<i>S \ NP / ADJ</i>	<i>ADJ</i>
<i>CCG</i>	$\lambda f. \lambda x. f(x)$	$\lambda x. fun(x)$
	$S \ NP$ $\lambda x. fun(x)$	

Combine categories using operators

$$A/B : f \quad B : g \Rightarrow A : f(g) \quad (>)$$

# Parsing with CCGs



Combine categories using operators

$$B : g \quad A \backslash B : f \Rightarrow A : f(g) \quad (<)$$

# CCG Operations

## Composition

- Equivalent to function composition
- Two directions: forward and backward

$$\begin{array}{l} \boxed{\begin{array}{c} f \\ A/B : f \end{array}} \quad \boxed{\begin{array}{c} g \\ B/C : g \end{array}} \Rightarrow \boxed{\begin{array}{c} f \circ g \\ A/C : \lambda x. f(g(x)) \end{array}} \quad (> B) \\ B \setminus C : g \quad A \setminus B : f \Rightarrow A \setminus C : \lambda x. f(g(x)) \quad (< B) \end{array}$$

# Querying Databases

State		
Abbr.	Capital	Pop.
AL	Montgomery	3.9
AK	Juneau	0.4
AZ	Phoenix	2.7
WA	Olympia	4.1
NY	Albany	17.5
IL	Springfield	11.4

Border	
State1	State2
WA	OR
WA	ID
CA	OR
CA	NV
CA	AZ

Mountains	
Name	State
Bianca	CO
Antero	CO
Rainier	WA
Shasta	CA
Wrangel	AK
Sill	CA
Bor	AK
Elb	



# Querying Databases

State		
Abbr.	Capital	Pop.
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What is the capital of Arizona?

How many states border California?

What is the largest state?

# Querying Databases

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Mountains	
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What is the capital of **Arizona**?

How many states border **California**?

What is the largest state?

Noun Phrases

# Querying Databases

State		
Abbr.	Capital	Pop.
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What is the capital of Arizona?

How many states **border** California?

What is the largest state?

Verbs



# Querying Databases

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Nouns

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What is the capital of Arizona?

How many states border California?

What is the largest state?

Prepositions

# Querying Databases

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Abbr.	Capital	Pop.
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Border	
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What is the capital of Arizona?

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What is the largest state?

Superlatives

# Querying Databases

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Border	
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WA	ID
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Mountains	
Name	State
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What is **the** capital of Arizona?

How many states border California?

What is **the** largest state?

Determiners

# Querying Databases

State		
Abbr.	Capital	Pop.
AL	Montgomery	3.9
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Border	
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Mountains	
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What is the capital of Arizona?

How many states border California?

What is the largest state?

Questions

# Referring to DB Entities

Noun phrases

Select single DB entities

Prepositions  
Verbs

Relations between entities

Nouns

Typing (i.e., column headers)

Superlatives

Ordering queries

# Noun Phrases

State	
Abbr.	Capital
AL	Montgomery
AK	Juneau
AZ	Phoenix
WA	Olympia
NY	Albany
IL	Springfield

Mountains	
Name	State
Bianca	CO
Antero	CO
Rainier	WA
Shasta	CA

In this context

Noun phrases name specific entities

Washington

WA

Florida

The Sunshine State

FL

# Noun Phrases

State	
Abbr.	Capital
AL	Montgomery
AK	Juneau
AZ	Phoenix
WA	Olympia
NY	Albany
IL	Springfield

Mountains	
Name	State
Bianca	CO
Antero	CO
Rainier	WA
Shasta	CA

Noun phrases name specific entities

Washington

*NP*  
*WA*

The Sunshine State

*NP*  
*FL*



# Verb Relations

State	
Abbr.	Capital
AL	Montgomery
AK	Juneau
AZ	Phoenix
WA	Olympia
NY	Albany
IL	Springfield

Border	
State1	State2
WA	OR
WA	ID
CA	OR
CA	NV
CA	AZ

Verbs express relations between entities

Nevada **borders** California  
*border(NV, CA)*

# Verb Relations

State	
Abbr.	Capital
AL	Montgomery
AK	Juneau
AZ	Phoenix
WA	Olympia
NY	Albany
IL	Springfield

Nevada

$NP$   
 $NV$

borders

$S \setminus NP / NP$   
 $\lambda x. \lambda y. border(y, x)$

California

$NP$   
 $CA$

$S \setminus NP$   
 $\lambda y. border(y, CA)$

$S$   
 $border(NV, CA)$

# Nouns

State	
Abbr.	Capital
AL	Montgomery
AK	Juneau
AZ	Phoenix
WA	Olympia
NY	Albany
IL	Springfield

Mountains	
Name	State
Bianca	CO
Antero	CO
Rainier	WA
Shasta	CA

Nouns are functions that define entity type

**state**

$\lambda x.state(x)$

**mountain**

$\lambda x.mountain(x)$

# Nouns

State	
Abbr.	Capital
AL	Montgomery
AK	Juneau
AZ	Phoenix
WA	Olympia
NY	Albany
IL	Springfield

Mountains	
Name	State
Bianca	CO
Antero	CO
Rainier	WA
Shasta	CA

Nouns are functions that define entity type

**state**

$\lambda x.state(x)$

{ WA , AL , AK , ... }

$e \rightarrow t$   
functions  
define sets

**mountain**

$\lambda x.mountain(x)$

{ BIANCA , ANTERO , ... }

# Nouns

State	
Abbr.	Capital
AL	Montgomery
AK	Juneau
AZ	Phoenix
WA	Olympia
NY	Albany
IL	Springfield

Mountains	
Name	State
Bianca	CO
Antero	CO
Rainier	WA
Shasta	CA

Nouns are functions that define entity type

**state**

$N$

$\lambda x.state(x)$

**mountain**

$N$

$\lambda x.mountain(x)$

# Prepositions

State	
Abbr.	Capital
AL	Montgomery
AK	Juneau
AZ	Phoenix
WA	Olympia
NY	Albany
IL	Springfield

Mountains	
Name	State
Bianca	CO
Antero	CO
Rainier	WA
Shasta	CA

Prepositional phrases are conjunctive modifiers

mountain in Colorado

# Prepositions

State	
Abbr.	Capital
AL	Montgomery
AK	Juneau
AZ	Phoenix
WA	Olympia
NY	Albany
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Mountains	
Name	State
Bianca	CO
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Rainier	WA
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Prepositional phrases are conjunctive modifiers

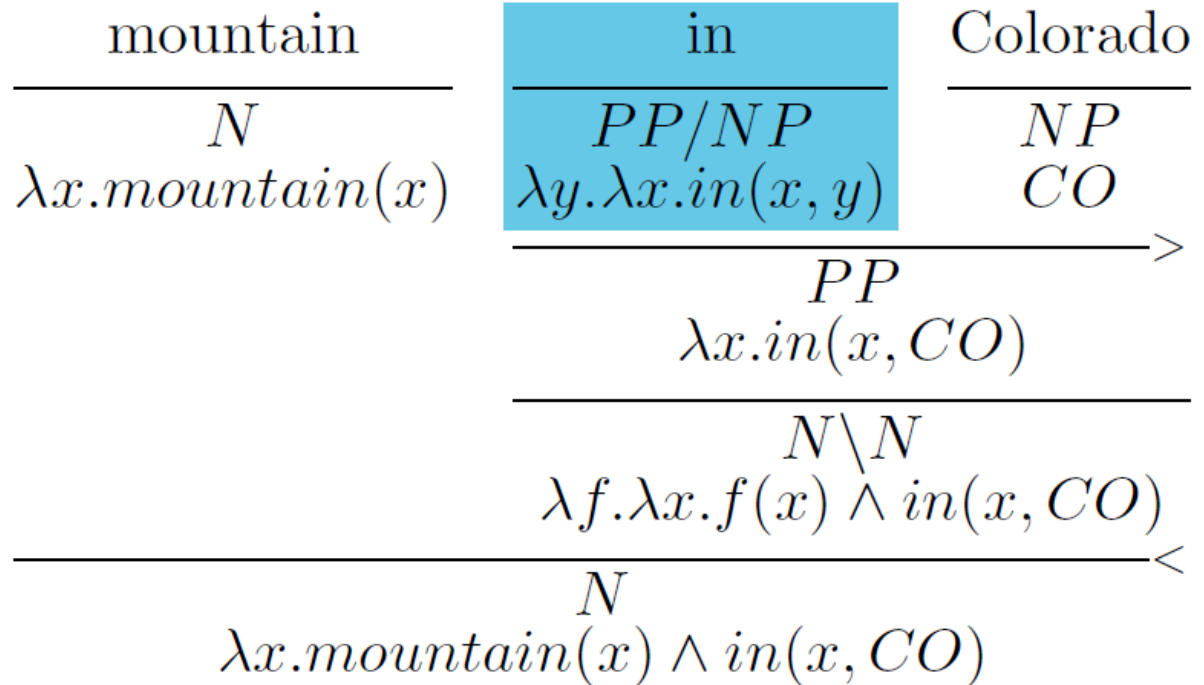
mountain in Colorado

$\lambda x. mountain(x) \wedge$   
 $in(x, CO)$

{ BIANCA , ANTERO }

# Prepositions

State	
Abbr.	Capital
AL	Montgomery
AK	Juneau
AZ	Phoenix
WA	Olympia
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IL	Springfield





# Function Words

State	
Abbr.	Capital
AL	Montgomery
AK	Juneau
AZ	Phoenix
WA	Olympia
NY	Albany
IL	Springfield

Border	
State1	State2
WA	OR
WA	ID
CA	OR
CA	NV
CA	AZ

Certain words are used to modify syntactic roles

state **that** borders California

$\lambda x.state(x) \wedge border(x, CA)$

{ **OR** , **NV** , **AZ** }

# Function Words

State	
Abbr.	Capital
AL	Montgomery
AK	Juneau
AZ	Phoenix
WA	Olympia
NY	Albany
IL	Springfield

state	that	borders	California
$\frac{N}{NV}$	$\frac{PP/(S \setminus NP)}{\lambda f.f}$	$\frac{S \setminus NP/NP}{\lambda x.\lambda y.border(y, x)}$	$\frac{NP}{CA}$
		$\frac{S \setminus NP}{\lambda y.border(y, CA)}$ >	
		$\frac{PP}{\lambda y.border(y, CA)}$ >	
		$\frac{N \setminus N}{\lambda f.\lambda y.f(y) \wedge border(y, CA)}$	
		$\frac{N}{\lambda x.state(x) \wedge (x, CA)}$ <	

# Definite Determiners

State	
Abbr.	Capital
AL	Montgomery
AK	Juneau
AZ	Phoenix
WA	Olympia
NY	Albany
IL	Springfield

Mountains	
Name	State
Bianca	CO
Antero	CO
Rainier	WA
Shasta	CA

Definite determiner  
selects the single members  
of a set when such exists

$$\iota : (e \rightarrow t) \rightarrow e$$

the mountain in Washington

# Definite Determiners

State	
Abbr.	Capital
AL	Montgomery
AK	Juneau
AZ	Phoenix
WA	Olympia
NY	Albany
IL	Springfield

Mountains	
Name	State
Bianca	CO
Antero	CO
Rainier	WA
Shasta	CA

Definite determiner selects the single members of a set when such exists

$$\iota : (e \rightarrow t) \rightarrow e$$

mountain in Washington

$\lambda x. mountain(x) \wedge in(x, WA)$

{ RAINIER }

# Definite Determiners

State	
Abbr.	Capital
AL	Montgomery
AK	Juneau
AZ	Phoenix
WA	Olympia
NY	Albany
IL	Springfield

Mountains	
Name	State
Bianca	CO
Antero	CO
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Definite determiner selects the single members of a set when such exists

$$\iota : (e \rightarrow t) \rightarrow e$$

the mountain in Washington

$$\iota x. mountain(x) \wedge in(x, WA)$$



# Definite Determiners

State	
Abbr.	Capital
AL	Montgomery
AK	Juneau
AZ	Phoenix
WA	Olympia
NY	Albany
IL	Springfield

Mountains	
Name	State
Bianca	CO
Antero	CO
Rainier	WA
Shasta	CA

Definite determiner selects the single members of a set when such exists

$$\iota : (e \rightarrow t) \rightarrow e$$

the mountain in Colorado

$$\iota x. mountain(x) \wedge in(x, CO)$$



No information to disambiguate

# Definite Determiners

State	
Abbr.	Capital
AL	Montgomery
AK	Juneau
AZ	Phoenix
WA	Olympia
NY	Albany
IL	Springfield

the

---

$NP/N$   
 $\lambda f.\iota x.f(x)$

mountain in Colorado

·  
·  
·

---

$N$   
 $\lambda x.mountain(x) \wedge in(x, CO)$

---

$NP$   
 $\iota x.mountain(x) \wedge in(x, CO)$

>

# Indefinite Determiners

State	
Abbr.	Capital
AL	Montgomery
AK	Juneau
AZ	Phoenix
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NY	Albany
IL	Springfield

Mountains	
Name	State
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Antero	CO
Rainier	WA
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Indefinite determiners are select any entity from a set without a preference

$$A : (e \rightarrow t) \rightarrow e$$

**state with a mountain**

$$\lambda x.state(x) \wedge in(\mathcal{A}y.mountain(y), x)$$



# Superlatives

State		
Abbr.	Capital	Pop.
AL	Montgomery	3.9
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AZ	Phoenix	2.7
WA	Olympia	4.1
NY	Albany	17.5
IL	Springfield	11.4

Superlatives select optimal entities according to a measure

**the largest state**

$\operatorname{argmax}(\lambda x.\text{state}(x), \lambda y.\text{pop}(y))$

Min or max ... over this set ... according to this measure

{ WA, AL, AK, ... }

AL	3.9
AK	0.4
Seattle	2.7
San Francisco	4.1
NY	17.5
IL	11.4

# Superlatives

State		
Abbr.	Capital	Pop.
AL	Montgomery	3.9
AK	Juneau	0.4
AZ	Phoenix	2.7
WA	Olympia	4.1
NY	Albany	17.5
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Superlatives select optimal entities according to a measure

**the largest state**

$\operatorname{argmax}(\lambda x. \text{state}(x), \lambda y. \text{pop}(y))$

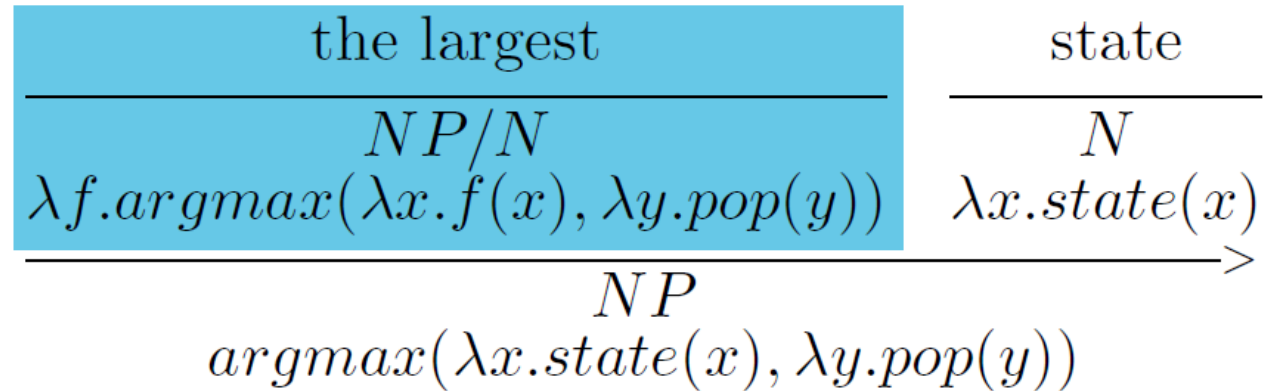
Min or max ... over this set ... according to this measure

CA

AL	3.9
AK	0.4
Seattle	2.7
San Francisco	4.1
NY	17.5
IL	11.4

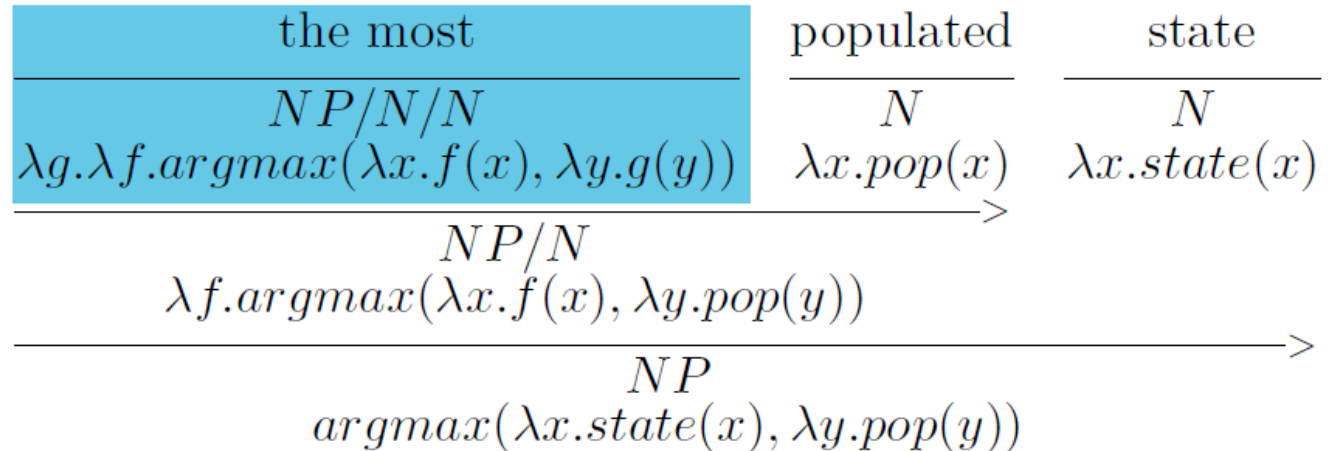
# Superlatives

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Abbr.	Capital
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# Superlatives

State	
Abbr.	Capital
AL	Montgomery
AK	Juneau
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# Representing Questions

State		
Abbr.	Capital	Pop.
AL	Montgomery	3.9
AK	Juneau	0.4

Border	
State1	State2
WA	OR
WA	ID
CA	OR

Mountains	
Name	State
Bianca	CO
Antero	CO
Rainier	WA

Which mountains are in Arizona?

Represent questions as the queries that generate their answers

# Representing Questions

State		
Abbr.	Capital	Pop.
AL	Montgomery	3.9
AK	Juneau	0.4

Border	
State1	State2
WA	OR
WA	ID
CA	OR

Mountains	
Name	State
Bianca	CO
Antero	CO
Rainier	WA

Which mountains are in Arizona?

$\lambda x. mountain(x) \wedge in(x, AZ)$

Represent questions as the queries that generate their answers

# Representing Questions

State		
Abbr.	Capital	Pop.
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AK	Juneau	0.4

Border	
State1	State2
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Name	State
Bianca	CO
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How many states border California?

$count(\lambda x.state(x) \wedge border(x, CA))$

Represent questions as the queries that generate their answers

# Spatial and Instructional Language

## Name objects

Noun phrases

Specific entities

Nouns

Sets of entities

Prepositional phrases  
Adjectives

Constrain sets

## Instructions to execute

Verbs

Davidsonian events

Imperatives

Sets of events



# Neo-Davidsonian Event Semantics

- Vincent shot Marvin in the car accidentally

$\exists a. shot(a) \wedge agent(a, VINCENT) \wedge$   
 $patient(a, MARVIN) \wedge in(a, \iota x. car(x)) \wedge \neg intentional(a)$

# Summary

- The connection between language, sets and logic
- Semantic Parsing
- Combinatory Categorical Grammars (CCGs)
- How to query KBs using NL

# Recommended Reading

A Very Short Introduction to CCG\*

*Mark Steedman*

Draft, November 1, 1996

<http://cs.brown.edu/courses/csci2952d/readings/lecture5-steedman.pdf>

# Recommended Reading

## **Open-Domain Semantic Parsing with Boxer**

**Johan Bos**

Center for Language and Cognition

University of Groningen

`johan.bos@rug.nl`

<http://cs.brown.edu/courses/csci2952d/readings/lecture8-bos.pdf>