

## Class 15: The Design of LISP

**Held:** Friday, February 23, 2007

**Summary:** Today we consider McCarthy's groundbreaking 1960 paper, "Recursive Functions of Symbolic Expressions and Their Computation by Machine, Part I", particularly the S-expressions and the `eval` function.

### Related Pages:

- EBoard.
- Reading: John McCarthy - Recursive Functions of Symbolic Epxressions and Their Computation by Machine, Part I.

### Notes:

- Don't forget Kumail's Comedy, tomorrow at 7 p.m.
- I believe I distributed Monday's reading last week.
- Wednesday's readings distributed today.

### Overview:

- Summary of the Paper.
- S-Expressions, S-Functions, and M-Expressions.
- Eval.
- Other Topics.

## Summary

- What is McCarthy's thesis (does he have a thesis)?
- What seem to be the main contributions of this paper?

## S-things and M-things

- What are S-expressions?
- What are M-expressions?
- What are S-functions?
- What does McCarthy say about their relationships?

## The eval Function

- What is it supposed to do?
- How does it work?
- (We'll start to replicate it in Scheme.)

## Other Topics

- How does the syntax seem to have changed?
- The eval procedure, as designed, is dynamically scoped rather than statically scoped.
  - What does that mean?
  - How can we well?
- How does the garbage collection system work?