

ORF522 – Linear and Nonlinear Optimization

17. Operator theory

Recap

Operators

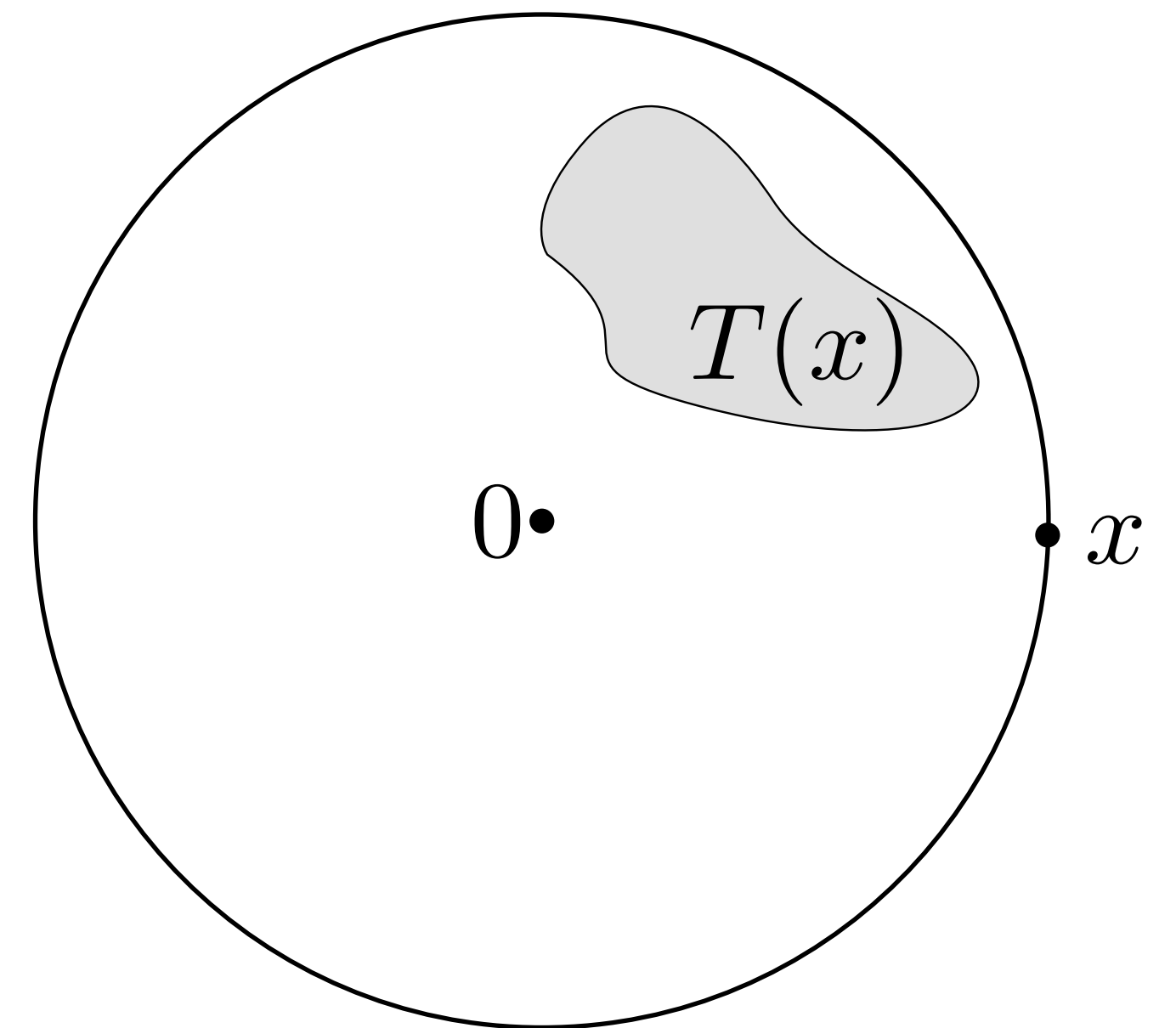
An operator T maps each point in \mathbf{R}^n to a subset of \mathbf{R}^n

- **set valued** $T(x)$ returns a set
- **single-valued** $T(x)$ (function) returns a singleton

The **domain** of T is the set $\text{dom } T = \{x \mid T(x) \neq \emptyset\}$

Example

- The subdifferential ∂f is a set-valued operator
- The gradient ∇f is a single-valued operator



Zeros

Zero

x is a **zero** of T if $0 \in T(x)$

Zero set

The set of all the zeros $T^{-1}(0) = \{x \mid 0 \in T(x)\}$

Example

If $T = \partial f$ and $f : \mathbf{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbf{R}$, then
 $0 \in T(x)$ means that x minimizes f

Many problems
can be posed as finding zeros
of an operator

Fixed points

\bar{x} is a **fixed-point** of a single-valued operator T if

$$\bar{x} = T(\bar{x})$$

Set of fixed points $\text{fix } T = \{x \in \text{dom } T \mid x = T(x)\} = (I - T)^{-1}(0)$

Examples

- **Identity** $T(x) = x$. Any point is a fixed point
- **Zero operator** $T(x) = 0$. Only 0 is a fixed point

Lipschitz operators

An operator T is L -Lipschitz if

$$\|T(x) - T(y)\| \leq L\|x - y\|, \quad \forall x, y \in \mathbf{dom} T$$

Fact If T is Lipschitz, then it is single-valued

Proof If $y = T(x), z = T(x)$, then $\|y - z\| \leq L\|x - x\| = 0 \implies y = z$ ■

For $L = 1$ we say T is **nonexpansive**

For $L < 1$ we say T is **contractive** (with contraction factor L)

Lipschitz operators examples

Lipschitz affine functions

$$T(x) = Ax + b$$



maximum singular value

$$L = \|A\|_2 = \sqrt{\lambda_{\max}(A^T A)}$$

Lipschitz differentiable functions

T such that there exists derivative DT



derivative is bounded

$$\|DT\|_2 \leq L$$

Lipschitz operators and fixed points

Given a L -Lipschitz operator T and a fixed point $\bar{x} = T\bar{x}$,

$$\|Tx - \bar{x}\| = \|Tx - T\bar{x}\| \leq L\|x - \bar{x}\|$$

A contractive operator ($L < 1$) can have at most one fixed point, i.e., $\text{fix } T = \{\bar{x}\}$

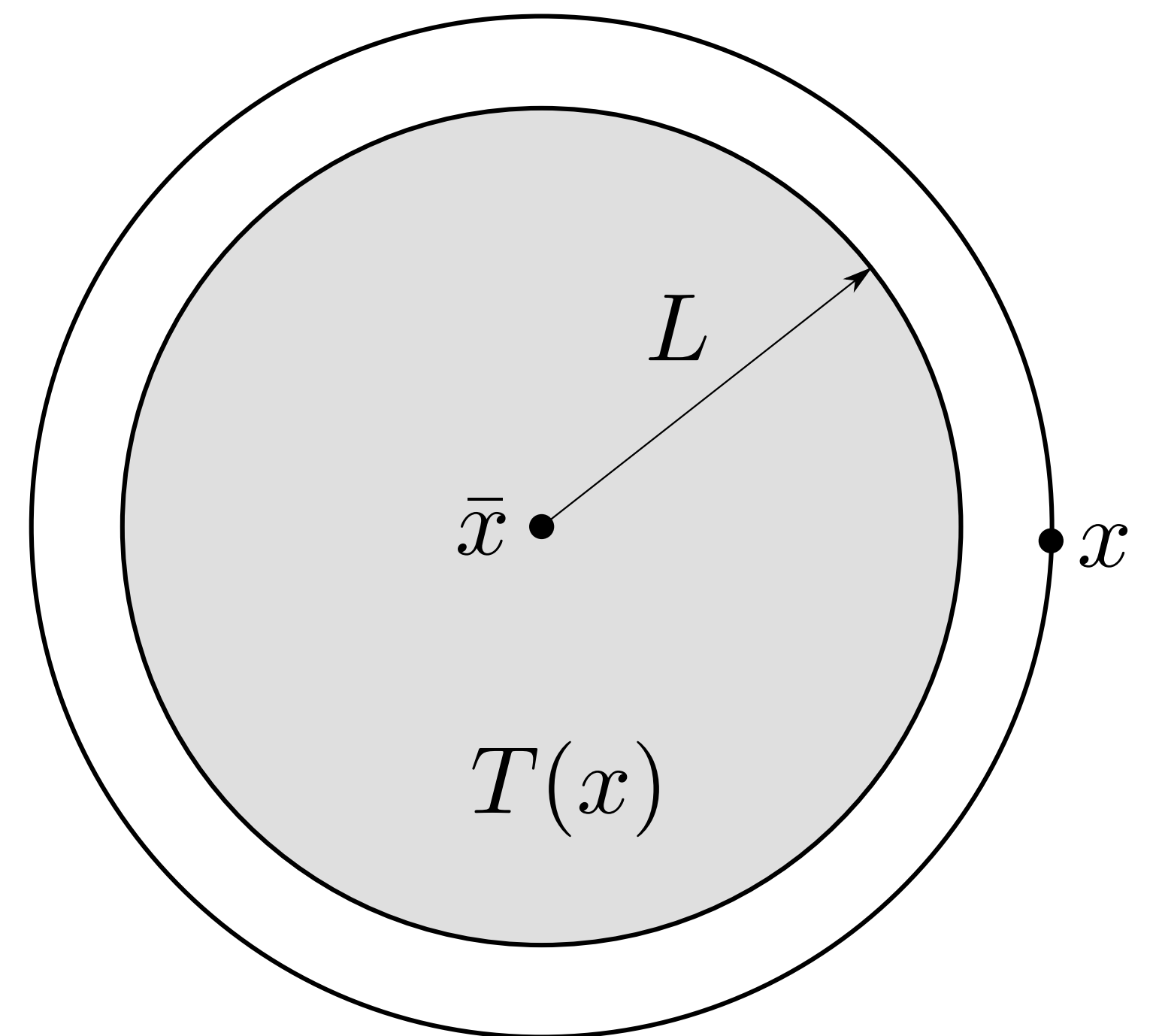
Proof

If $\bar{x}, \bar{y} \in \text{fix } T$ and $\bar{x} \neq \bar{y}$ then

$$\|\bar{x} - \bar{y}\| = \|T(\bar{x}) - T(\bar{y})\| < \|\bar{x} - \bar{y}\| \quad (\text{contradiction}) \blacksquare$$

A nonexpansive operator ($L = 1$) need not have a fixed point

Example $T(x) = x + 2$

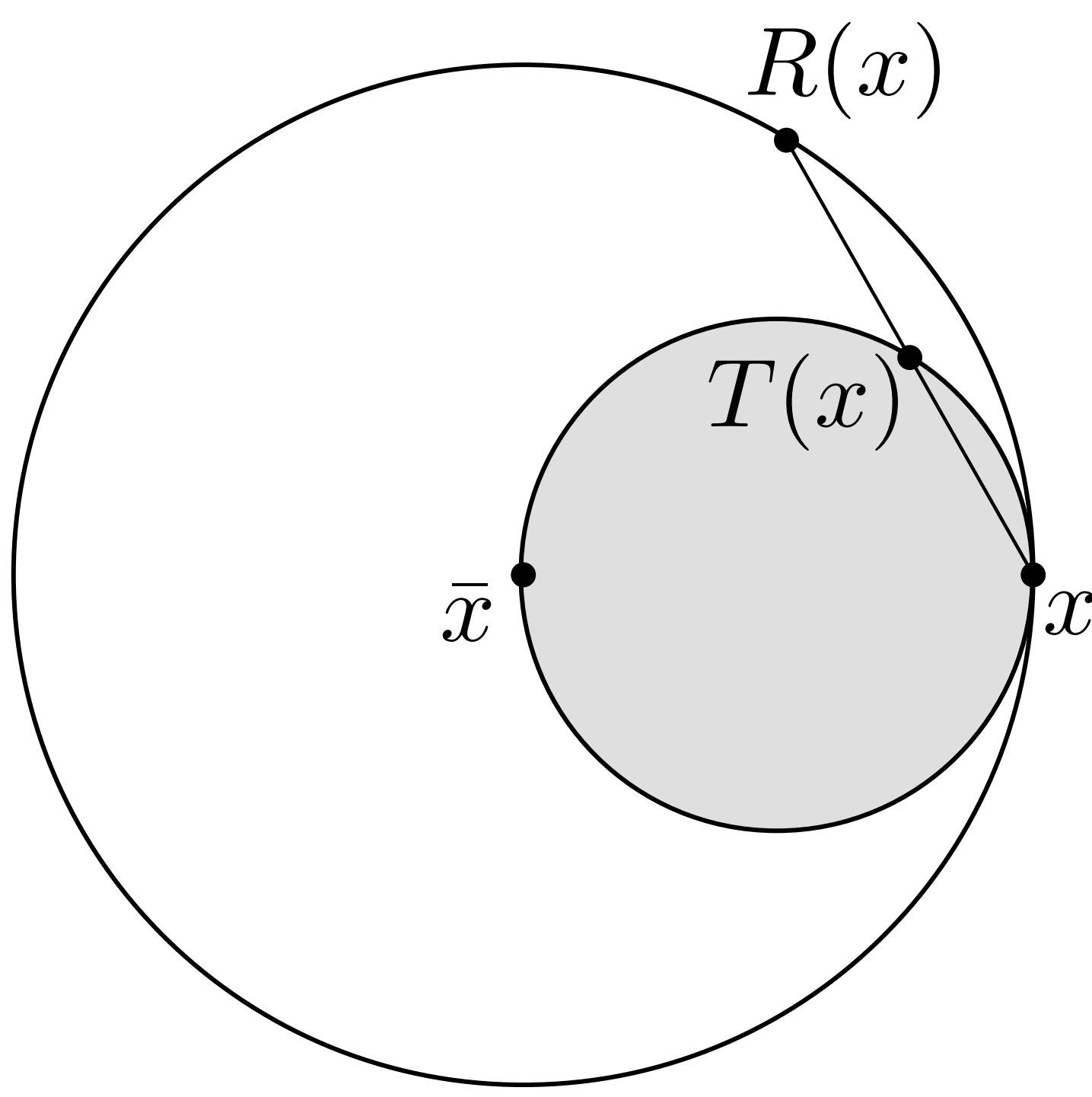


Averaged operators

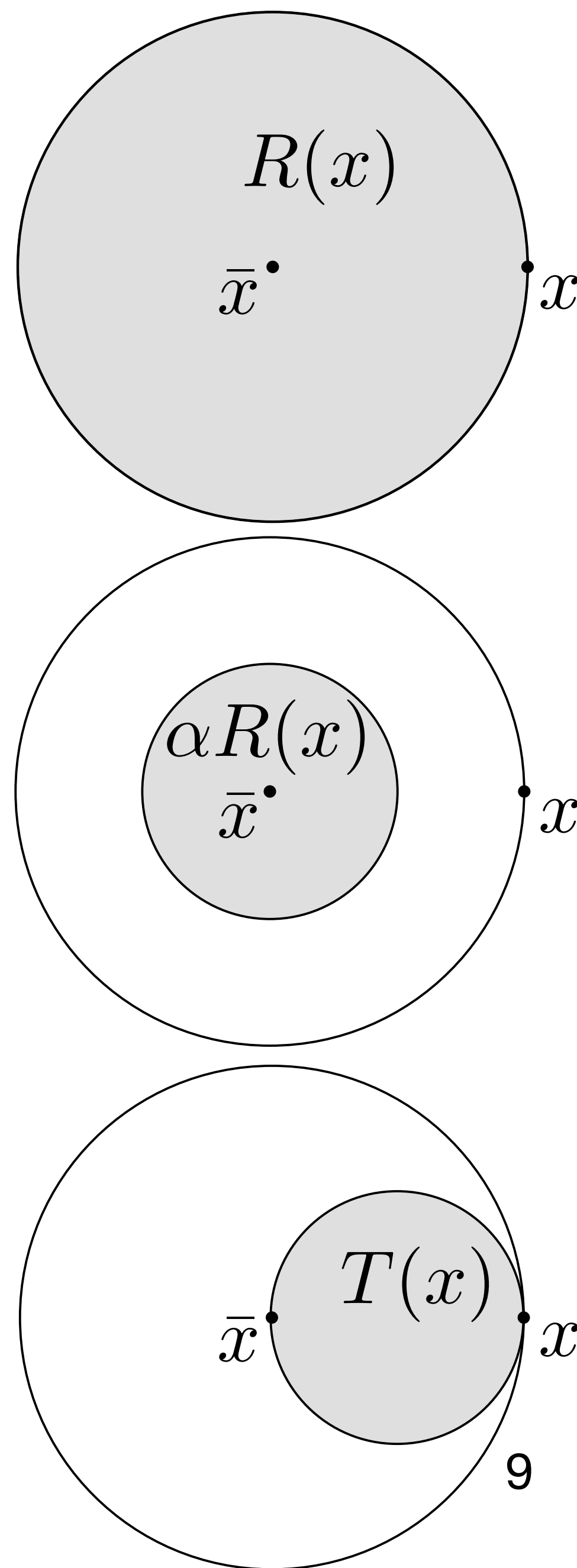
We say that an operator T is α -**averaged** with $\alpha \in (0, 1)$ if

$$T = (1 - \alpha)I + \alpha R$$

and R is nonexpansive.



Example $\alpha = 1/2$



How to design an algorithm

Problem

minimize $f(x)$

Algorithm (operator) construction

1. Find a suitable T such that $\bar{x} \in \text{fix } T$ solve your problem
2. Show that the fixed point iteration converges

If T is contractive \implies **linear convergence**

If T is averaged \implies **sublinear convergence**

Most first order algorithms can be constructed in this way

Today's lecture

[Chapter 4, First-order methods in optimization, Beck]

[Proximal Algorithms, Parikh and Boyd]

[A primer on monotone operator methods, Parikh and Boyd]

Monotone operators

- Conjugate functions and duality
- Monotone and cocoercive operators
- Subdifferential operator and monotonicity
- Operators in optimization problems
- Operators in algorithms
- Building contractions

Conjugate functions and duality

Convex closed proper functions

A function $f : \mathbf{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbf{R}$ is called **CCP** if it is

closed $\text{epi } f$ is a closed set

convex $f(\alpha x + (1 - \alpha)y) \leq \alpha f(x) + (1 - \alpha)f(y), \quad \alpha \in [0, 1]$

proper $\text{dom } f$ is nonempty

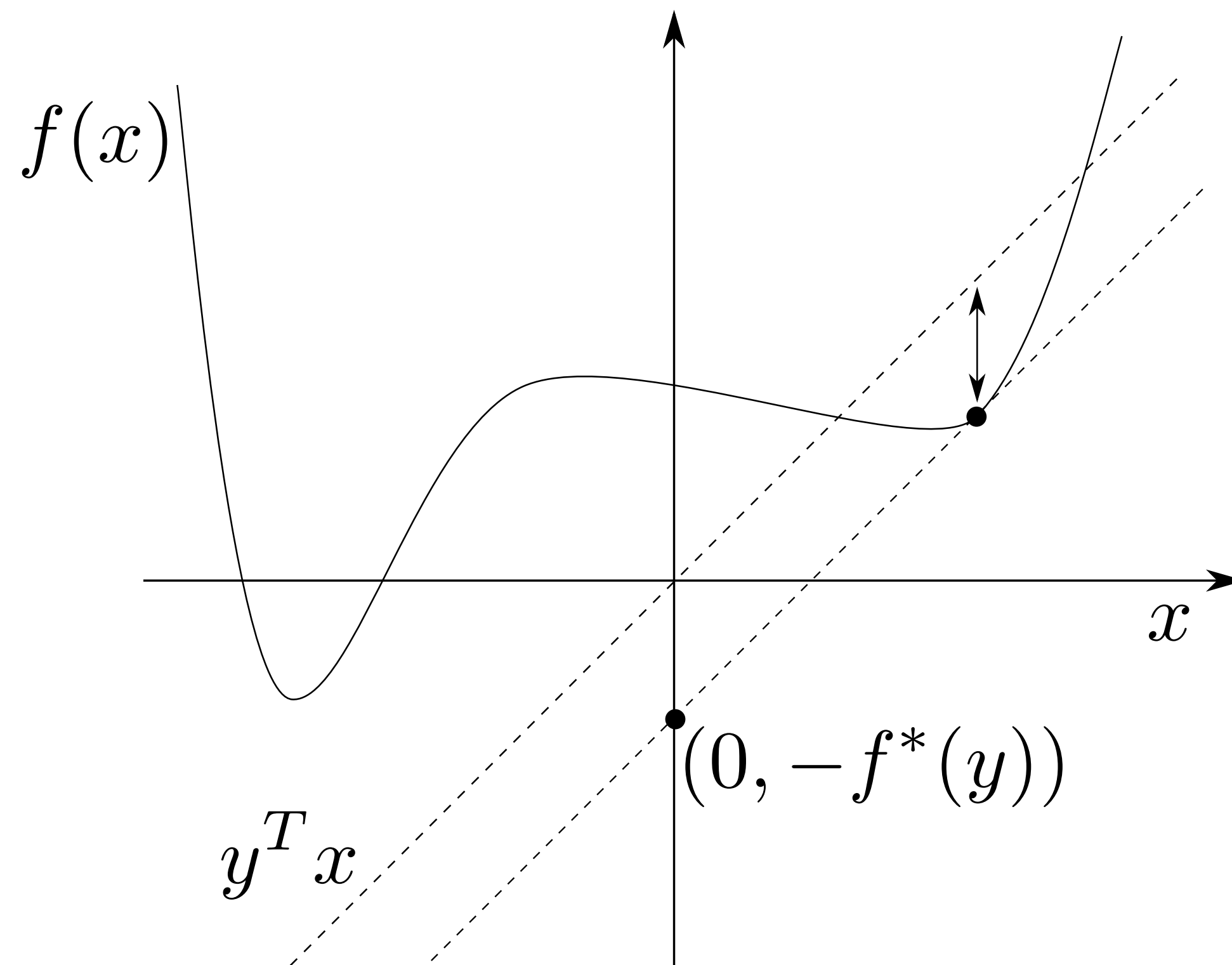
If not otherwise stated, we assume functions to be **CCP**

Conjugate function

Given a function $f : \mathbf{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbf{R}$ we define its **conjugate** $f^* : \mathbf{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbf{R}$ as

$$f^*(y) = \max_x y^T x - f(x)$$

Note f^* is always convex (pointwise maximum of affine functions in y)



f^* is the *maximum gap* between $y^T x$ and $f(x)$

Conjugate function properties and examples

Properties

Fenchel's inequality $f(x) + f^*(y) \geq y^T x$

Biconjugate $f^{**}(y) = \max_x y^T x - f^*(x) \implies f(x) \geq f^{**}(x)$

Biconjugate for CCP functions If f CCP, then $f^{**} = f$

Examples

Norm $f(x) = \|x\|$: $f^*(y) = \mathcal{I}_{\|y\|_* \leq 1}(y)$ **indicator function of dual norm set**

Indicator function $f(x) = \mathcal{I}_C(x)$: $f^*(y) = \mathcal{I}_C^*(y) = \max_{x \in C} y^T x = \sigma_C(y)$ **support function**

Fenchel dual

Dual using conjugate functions

$$\text{minimize } f(x) + g(x)$$



Equivalent form (variables split)

$$\begin{array}{ll} \text{minimize} & f(x) + g(z) \\ \text{subject to} & x = z \end{array}$$

Lagrangian

$$L(x, z, y) = f(x) + g(z) + y^T (z - x) = -(y^T x - f(x)) - (-y^T z - g(z))$$

Dual function

$$\min_{x, z} L(x, z, y) = -f^*(y) - g^*(-y)$$

Dual problem

$$\text{maximize } -f^*(y) - g^*(-y)$$

Fenchel dual example

Constrained optimization

$$\text{minimize } f(x) + \mathcal{I}_C(x)$$



Dual problem

$$\text{maximize } -f^*(y) - \sigma_C(-y)$$

Norm penalization

$$\text{minimize } f(x) + \|x\|$$



Dual problem

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{maximize } -f^*(y) \\ &\text{subject to } \|y\|_* \leq 1 \end{aligned}$$

Remarks

- Fenchel duality can simplify derivations
- Useful when conjugates are known
- Very common in operator splitting algorithms

Monotone cocoercive operators

Monotone operators

An operator T on \mathbf{R}^n is **monotone** if

$$(u - v)^T (x - y) \geq 0, \quad \forall (x, u), (y, v) \in \text{gph} T$$

T is **maximal monotone** if

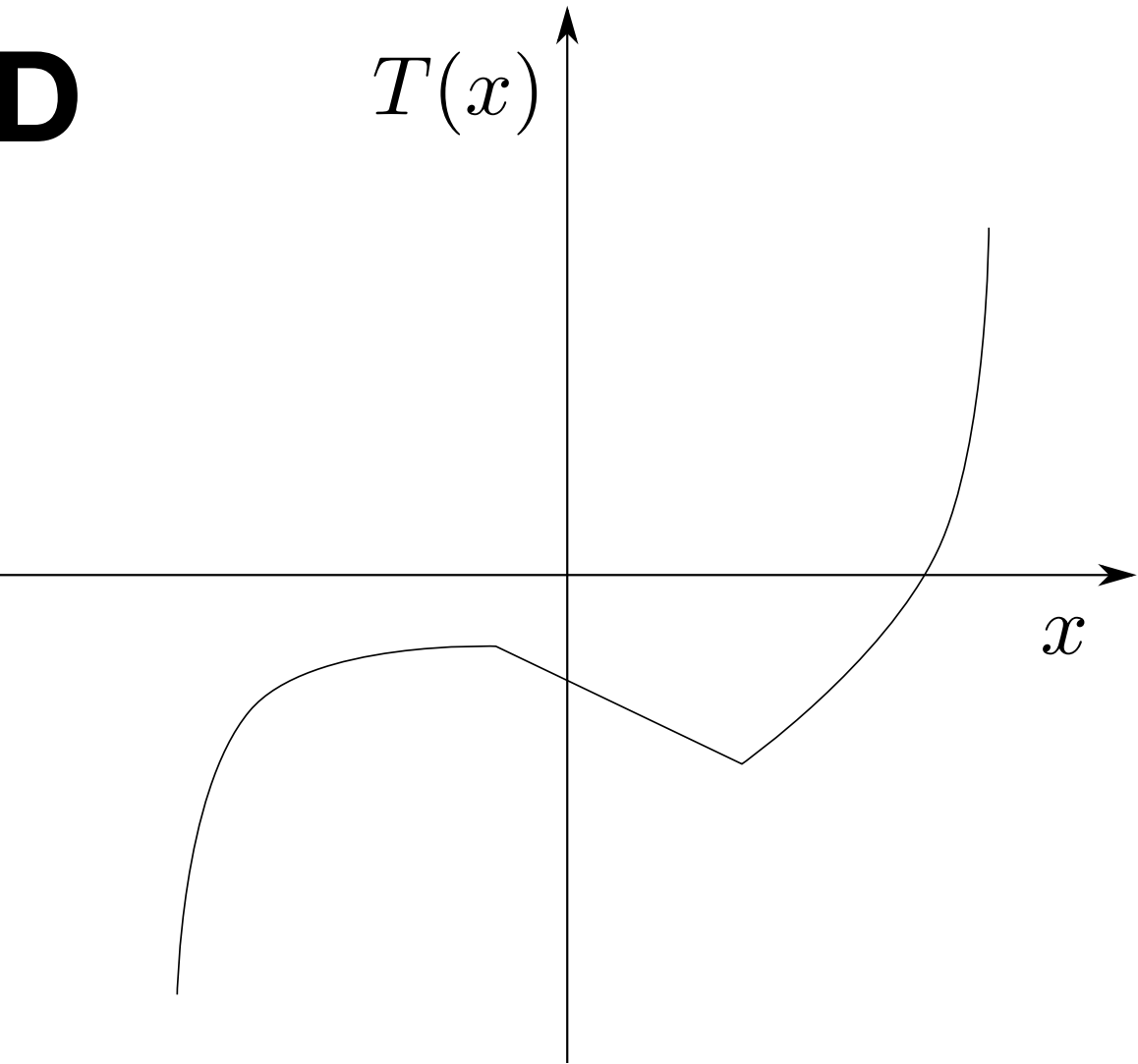
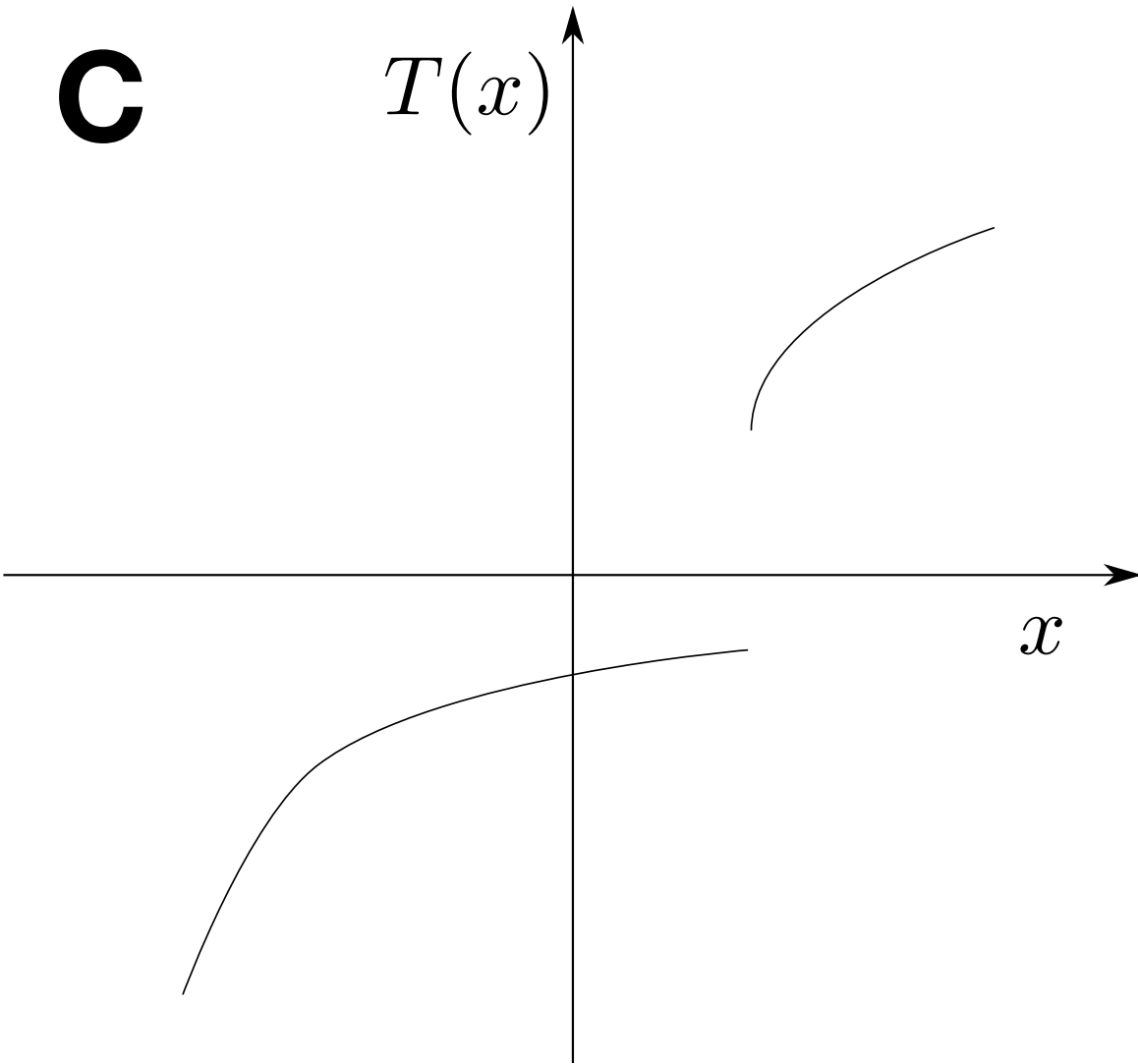
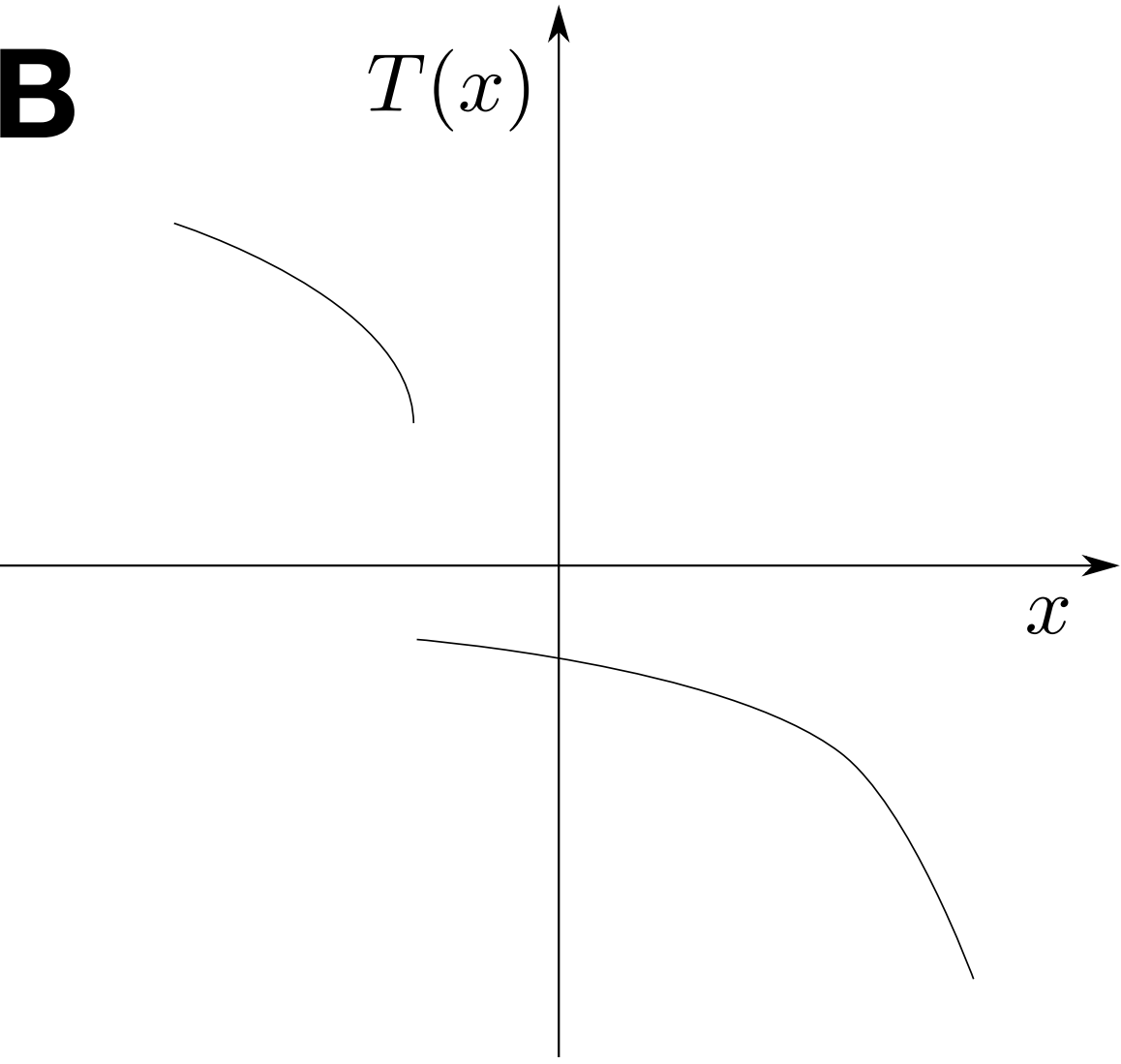
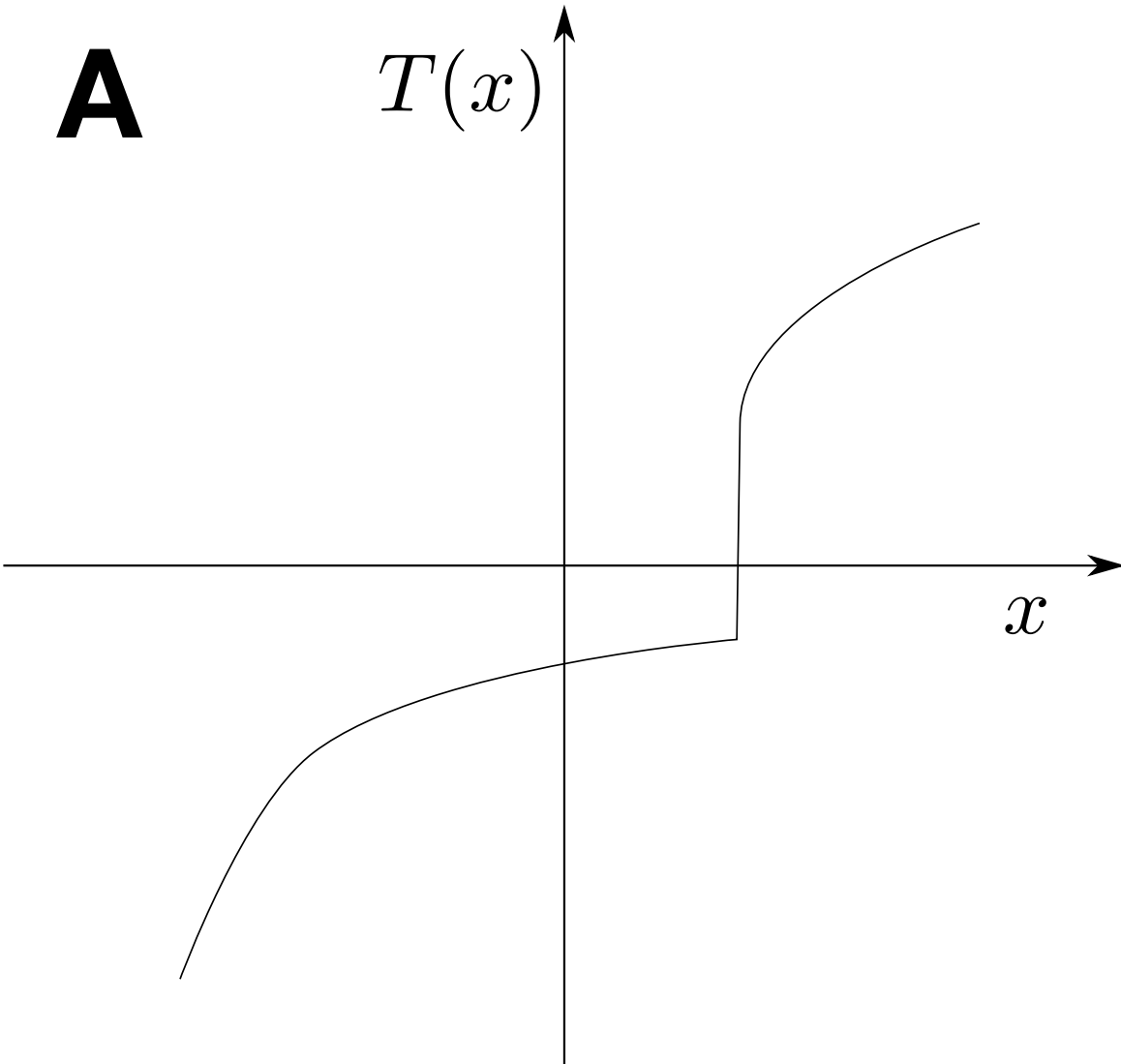
$\nexists (\bar{x}, \bar{u}) \notin \text{gph} T$ such that

$$(\bar{u} - u)^T (\bar{x} - x) \geq 0$$

Equivalently: \nexists monotone R
such that $\text{gph} T \subset \text{gph} R$

Monotone operators in 1D

Let's fill the table



	Monotone	Max Monotone
A		
B		
C		
D		

Monotonicity

$$y > x \Rightarrow T(y) \geq T(x)$$

Continuity

If T single-valued,
continuous and monotone,
then it's maximal monotone²⁰

Monotone operator properties

- **sum** $T + R$ is monotone
- **nonnegative scaling** αT with $\alpha \geq 0$ is monotone
- **inverse** T^{-1} is monotone
- **congruence** for $M \in \mathbf{R}^{n \times m}$, then $M^T T(Mz)$ is monotone on \mathbf{R}^m

Affine function $T(x) = Ax + b$ is maximal monotone
 $\iff A + A^T \succeq 0$

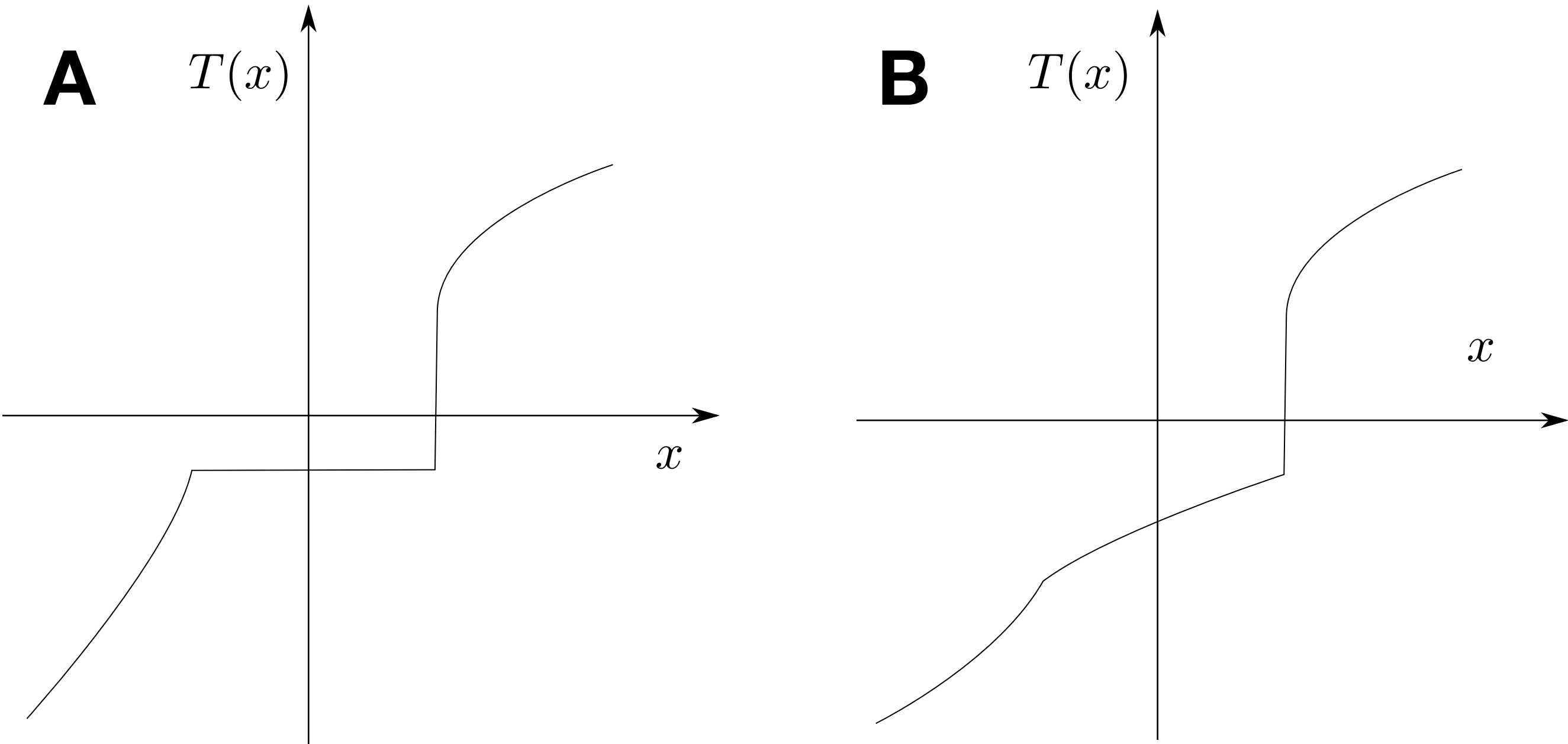
Strongly monotone operators

An operator T on \mathbb{R}^n is μ -strongly monotone if

$$(u - v)^T (x - y) \geq \mu \|x - y\|^2, \quad \mu > 0 \qquad \text{(also called } \mu\text{-coercive)}$$

$$\forall (x, u), (y, v) \in \text{gph}T$$

Let's fill the table



	Monotone	Strongly Monotone
A		
B		

The slope is at least μ

Cocoercive operators

An operator T is β -**cocoercive**, $\beta > 0$, if

$$(T(x) - T(y))^T (x - y) \geq \beta \|T(x) - T(y)\|^2$$

If T is β -**cocoercive**, then T is $(1/\beta)$ -**Lipschitz**

Proof $\beta \|T(x) - T(y)\|^2 \leq (T(x) - T(y))^T (x - y) \leq \|T(x) - T(y)\| \|x - y\|$
 $\implies \|T(x) - T(y)\| \leq (1/\beta) \|x - y\|$ ■

If T is μ -**strongly monotone** if and only if T^{-1} is μ -**cocoercive**

Proof $(T(x) - T(y))^T (x - y) \geq \mu \|x - y\|^2$

Inverse: $u = T(x)$ and $v = T(y)$ if and only if $x \in T^{-1}(u)$ and $y \in T^{-1}(v)$

$$(u - v)^T (T^{-1}(u) - T^{-1}(v)) \geq \mu \|T^{-1}(u) - T^{-1}(v)\|^2$$
 ■

Cocoercive and nonexpansive operators

If T is β -**cocoercive** if and only if $I - 2\beta T$ is **nonexpansive**

Proof

$$\begin{aligned} & \| (I - 2\beta T)(y) - (I - 2\beta T)(x) \|^2 = \\ &= \| y - 2\beta T(y) - x + 2\beta T(x) \|^2 \\ &= \| y - x \|^2 - 4\beta (T(y) - T(x))^T (y - x) + 4\beta^2 \| T(y) - T(x) \|^2 \\ &= \| y - x \|^2 - 4\beta \left((T(y) - T(x))^T (y - x) - \beta \| T(y) - T(x) \|^2 \right) \\ &\leq \| y - x \|^2 \quad \blacksquare \quad \text{(cocoercive)} \end{aligned}$$

Summary of monotone and cocoercive operators

Monotone

$$(T(x) - T(y))^T (x - y) \geq 0$$

$$\uparrow \mu = 0$$

Lipschitz

$$\|F(x) - F(y)\| \leq L\|x - y\|$$

$$\uparrow L = 1/\mu$$

Strongly monotone

$$(T(x) - T(y))^T (x - y) \geq \mu\|x - y\|^2$$

$$\longleftrightarrow F = T^{-1}$$

Cocoercive

$$(F(x) - F(y))^T (x - y) \geq \mu\|F(x) - F(y)\|^2$$

$$\updownarrow G = I - 2\mu F$$

Nonexpansive

$$\|G(x) - G(y)\| \leq \|x - y\|$$

Subdifferential operator and monotonicity

Subdifferential operator monotonicity

$$\partial f(x) = \{g \mid f(y) \geq f(x) + g^T(y - x)\}$$

$\partial f(x)$ is **monotone** (also for nonconvex functions)

Proof Suppose $u \in \partial f(x)$ and $v \in \partial f(y)$ then

$$f(y) \geq f(x) + u^T(y - x), \quad f(x) \geq f(y) + v^T(x - y)$$

By adding them, we can write $(u - v)^T(x - y) \geq 0$ 

Maximal monotonicity

If f is convex, closed and proper (CCP), then $\partial f(x)$ is maximal monotone

Strongly monotone and cocoercive subdifferential

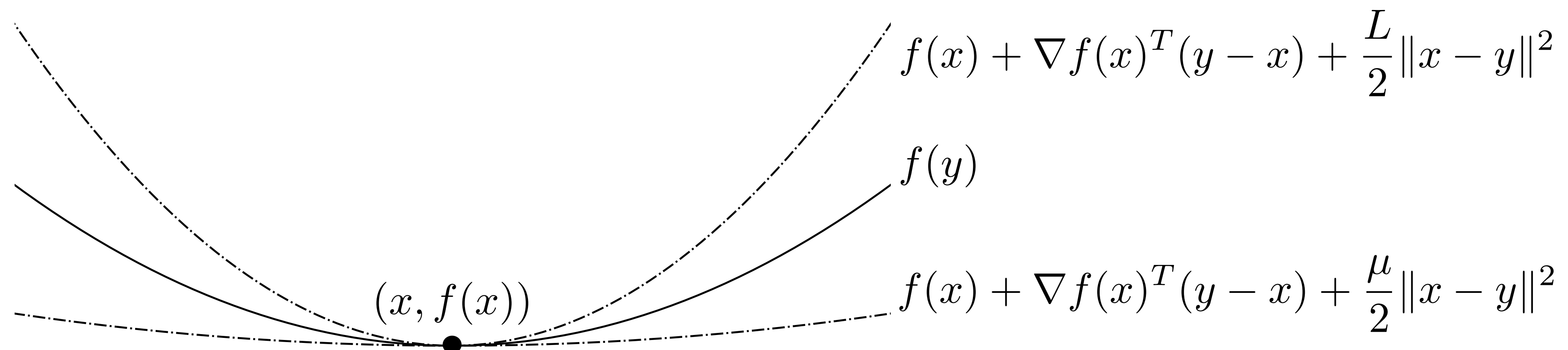
f is μ -**strongly convex** $\iff \partial f$ μ -**strongly monotone**

$$(\partial f(x) - \partial f(y))^T (x - y) \geq \mu \|x - y\|^2$$

f is L -**smooth**

$\iff \partial f$ L -**Lipschitz** and $\partial f = \nabla f$: $\|\nabla f(x) - \nabla f(y)\| \leq L\|x - y\|$

$\iff \partial f$ $(1/L)$ -**cocoercive**: $(\nabla f(x) - \nabla f(y))^T (x - y) \geq (1/L)\|\nabla f(x) - \nabla f(y)\|^2$



Inverse of subdifferential

If f is CCP, then, $(\partial f)^{-1} = \partial f^*$

Proof

$$\begin{aligned}(u, v) \in \mathbf{gph}(\partial f)^{-1} &\iff (v, u) \in \mathbf{gph} \partial f \\ &\iff u \in \partial f(v) \\ &\iff 0 \in \partial f(v) - u \\ &\iff v \in \operatorname{argmin}_x f(x) - u^T x \\ &\iff f^*(u) = u^T v - f(v)\end{aligned}$$

Therefore, $f(v) + f^*(u) = u^T v$. If f is CCP, then $f^{**} = f$ and we can write

$$f^{**}(v) + f^*(u) = u^T v \iff (u, v) \in \mathbf{gph} \partial f^* \quad \blacksquare$$

Strong convexity is the dual of smoothness

$$f \text{ is } \mu\text{-strongly convex} \iff f^* \text{ is } (1/\mu)\text{-smooth}$$

Proof

$$\begin{aligned} f \text{ } \mu\text{-strongly convex} &\iff \partial f \text{ } \mu\text{-strongly monotone} \\ &\iff (\partial f)^{-1} = \partial f^* \text{ } \mu\text{-cocoercive} \\ &\iff f^* \text{ } (1/\mu)\text{-smooth} \quad \blacksquare \end{aligned}$$

Remark: strong convexity and (strong) smoothness are **dual**

Operators in optimization problems

KKT operator

minimize $f(x)$
subject to $Ax = b$



Lagrangian

$$L(x, y) = f(x) + y^T (Ax - b)$$

KKT operator

$$T(x, y) = \begin{bmatrix} \partial_x L(x, y) \\ -\partial_y L(x, y) \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \partial f(x) + A^T y \\ b - Ax \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} r^{\text{dual}} \\ -r^{\text{prim}} \end{bmatrix}$$

zero set $\{(x, y) \mid 0 \in T(x, y)\}$ is the set of **primal-dual optimal points**

Monotonicity

$$T(x, y) = \begin{bmatrix} \partial f(x) \\ b \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} 0 & A^T \\ -A & 0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} x \\ y \end{bmatrix}$$

**sum of monotone
operators**

skew-symmetric

“multiplier to residual” mapping

$$\begin{array}{ll}
 \text{minimize} & f(x) \\
 \text{subject to} & Ax = b
 \end{array}
 \longrightarrow
 \begin{array}{l}
 \text{Lagrangian} \\
 L(x, y) = f(x) + y^T (Ax - b)
 \end{array}$$

Dual problem

$$\text{maximize} \quad g(y) = \min_x L(x, y) = - \max_x -L(x, y) = -(f^*(-A^T y) + y^T b)$$

Operator

$$T(y) = b - Ax, \text{ where } x = \operatorname{argmin}_z L(z, y) \longrightarrow \text{If } f \text{ CCP, then } T \text{ is monotone}$$

Monotonicity

Proof

$$0 \in \partial f(x) + A^T y \iff x = (\partial f)^{-1}(-A^T y)$$

$$\text{Therefore, } T(y) = b - A(\partial f)^{-1}(-A^T y) = \partial_y (b^T y + f^*(-A^T y)) = \partial(-g) \blacksquare$$

Operators in algorithms

Forward step operator

The **forward step operator** of T is defined as

$$I - \gamma T$$

In general **monotonicity of T** is not enough for convergence

Example

minimize x
subject to $x = 0$

KKT operator

$$T(x, y) = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ -1 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} x \\ y \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

Monotone (skew-symmetric)

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ -1 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \quad A + A^T = 0 \succeq 0$$

Forward step

$$(I - \gamma T) \begin{bmatrix} x \\ y \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & -\gamma \\ \gamma & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} x \\ y \end{bmatrix} - \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} \longrightarrow$$

Expansive

$$\left\| \begin{bmatrix} 1 & -\gamma \\ \gamma & 1 \end{bmatrix} \right\|_2 > 1, \quad \forall \gamma$$

Gradient step: special case of forward step

$$f \text{ } L\text{-smooth} \iff \nabla f \text{ } (1/L)\text{-cocoercive} \iff I - (2/L)\nabla f \text{ nonexpansive}$$

Construct averaged iterations

$$I - \gamma \nabla f = (1 - \alpha)I + \alpha(I - (2/L)\nabla f)$$

$$\text{where } \alpha = \gamma L/2 \in (0, 1) \iff \gamma \in (0, 2/L)$$

Remark

- Only smoothness assumption gives **sublinear convergence**
- Similar result we obtained in gradient descent lecture

Resolvent and Cayley operators

The **resolvent** of operator A is defined as

$$R_A = (I + A)^{-1}$$

The **Cayley (reflection) operator** of A is defined as

$$C_A = 2R_A - I = 2(I + A)^{-1} - I$$

Properties

- If A is maximal monotone, $\text{dom } R_A = \text{dom } C_A = \mathbf{R}^n$ (Minty's theorem)
- If A is **monotone**, R_A and C_A are **nonexpansive** (thus functions)
- **Zeros** of A are **fixed points** of R_A and C_A

Key result we can solve $0 \in A(x)$ by finding fixed points of C_A or R_A

Fixed points of R_A and C_A are zeros of A

Proof

$$R_A = (I + A)^{-1}$$

$$x \in \mathbf{fix} R_A$$

$$0 \in A(x) \iff x \in (I + A)(x)$$

$$\iff (I + A)^{-1}(x) = x$$

$$\iff x = R_A(x)$$

$$x \in \mathbf{fix} C_A$$

$$C_A(x) = 2R_A(x) - I(x) = 2x - x = x$$



If A is monotone, then R_A is nonexpansive

Proof

If $(x, u) \in \text{gph} R_A$ and $(y, v) \in \text{gph} R_A$, then

$$u + A(u) \ni x, \quad v + A(v) \ni y$$

Subtract to get $u - v + (A(u) - A(v)) \ni x - y$

Multiply by $(u - v)^T$ and use monotonicity of A (being also a function) to get

$$\|u - v\|^2 \leq (x - y)^T (u - v)$$

Apply Cauchy-Schwarz and divide by $\|u - v\|$ to get

$$\|u - v\| \leq \|x - y\|$$




If A is monotone, then C_A is nonexpansive

Proof

Given $u = R_A(x)$ and $v = R_A(y)$ (R_A is a function)

$$\begin{aligned}\|C(x) - C(y)\|^2 &= \|(2u - x) - (2v - y)\|^2 \\ &= \|2(u - v) - (x - y)\|^2 \\ &= 4\|u - v\|^2 - 4(u - v)^T(x - y) + \|x - y\|^2 \\ &\leq \|x - y\|^2\end{aligned}$$

Note from previous slide: $\|u - v\|^2 \leq (u - v)^T(x - y)$ 

Remark

R_A is nonexpansive since it is the average of I and C_A :

$$R_A = (1/2)I + (1/2)C_A = (1/2)I + (1/2)(2R_A - 1)$$

Role of maximality

We mostly consider **maximal** operators A because of

Theory: A , R_A and C_A do not bring iterates outside their domains

Practice: hard to compute R_A and C_A for non-maximal monotone operators, e.g., when $A = \partial f(x)$ where f nonconvex.

Resolvent of subdifferential: proximal operator

$$\text{prox}_f = R_{\partial f} = (I + \partial f)^{-1}$$

Proof

Let $z = \text{prox}_f(x)$, then

$$z = \operatorname{argmin}_u f(u) + \frac{1}{2} \|u - x\|^2$$

$$\iff 0 \in \partial f(z) + z - x \quad (\text{optimality conditions})$$

$$\iff x \in (I + \partial f)(z)$$

$$\iff z = (I + \partial f)^{-1}(x)$$



Resolvent of normal cone: projection

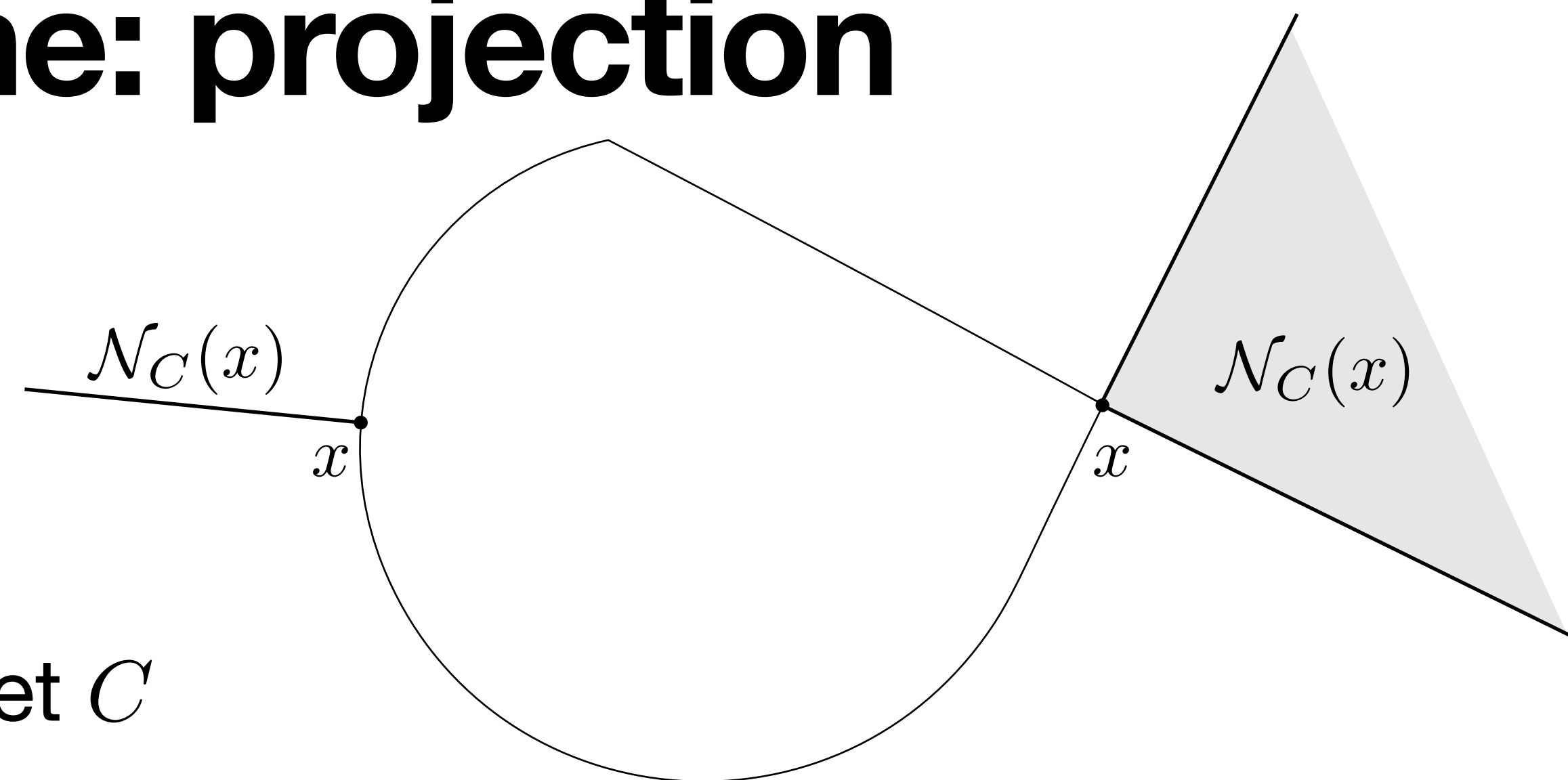
$$R_{\partial I_C} = \Pi_C(x)$$

Proof

Let $f = \mathcal{I}_C$, the indicator function of a convex set C

Recall: $\partial \mathcal{I}_C(x) = \mathcal{N}_C(x)$ **normal cone operator**

$$u = (I + \partial \mathcal{I}_C)^{-1}(x) \iff u = \operatorname{argmin}_z \mathcal{I}_C(u) + (1/2)\|z - x\|^2 = \Pi_C(x) \quad \blacksquare$$



\mathcal{N}_C monotone $\implies \Pi_C$ nonexpansive

Proof

$$u \in \mathcal{N}_C(x) \Rightarrow u^T(z - x) \leq 0, \forall z \in C \Rightarrow u^T(y - x) \leq 0$$

$$v \in \mathcal{N}_C(y) \Rightarrow v^T(z - y) \leq 0, \forall z \in C \Rightarrow v^T(x - y) \leq 0$$

add to obtain
monotonicity \blacksquare

Building contractions


Forward step contractions

Given T L -Lipschitz and μ -strongly monotone, then $I - \gamma T$ converges linearly at rate $\sqrt{1 - 2\gamma\mu + \gamma^2 L^2}$, with optimal step $\gamma = \mu/L^2$.

Proof

$$\begin{aligned} \|(I - \gamma T)(x) - (I - \gamma T)(y)\|^2 &= \|x - y + \gamma T(x) - \gamma T(y)\|^2 \\ &= \|x - y\|^2 - 2\gamma (T(x) - T(y))^T (x - y) + \gamma^2 \|T(x) - T(y)\|^2 \\ &\leq (1 - 2\gamma\mu + \gamma^2 L^2) \|x - y\|^2 \end{aligned}$$

strongly
monotone Lipschitz



Remarks

- It applies to **gradient descent** with L -smooth and μ -strongly convex f
- Better rate in gradient descent lecture.

Bound derivative: $\|D(I - \gamma \nabla^2 f(x))\|_2 \leq \max\{|1 - \gamma L|, |1 - \gamma \mu|\}$.

Optimal step $\gamma = 2/(\mu + L)$ and factor $(\mu/L - 1)(\mu/L + 1)$.

Resolvent contractions

If A is μ -strongly monotone, then

$$R_A = (I + A)^{-1}$$

is a contraction with Lipschitz parameter $1/(1 + \mu)$

Proof

A μ -strongly monotone $\implies (I + A)$ $(1 + \mu)$ -strongly monotone
 $\implies R_A = (I + A)^{-1}$ $(1 + \mu)$ -cocoercive
 $\implies R_A$ $(1/(1 + \mu))$ -Lipschitz ■

Cayley contractions

If A is μ -strongly monotone and L -Lipschitz, then

$$C_{\gamma A} = 2R_{\gamma A} - I = 2(I + \gamma A)^{-1} - I$$

is a contraction with factor $\sqrt{1 - 4\gamma\mu/(1 + \gamma L)^2}$

Remark need also Lipschitz condition

Proof

[Page 20, A primer on monotone operator methods, Parikh and Boyd]

If, in addition, $A = \partial f$ where f is CCP, then $C_{\gamma A}$ converges with factor $(\sqrt{\mu/L} - 1)/(\sqrt{\mu/L} + 1)$ and optimal step $\gamma = 1/\sqrt{\mu L}$

Proof

[Linear Convergence and Metric Selection for Douglas-Rachford Splitting and ADMM, Giselsson and Boyd]

Requirements for contractions

	Operator A	Function f ($A = \partial f$)
Forward step $I - \gamma A$	μ -strongly monotone	μ -strongly convex L -smooth
Resolvent $R_A = (I + A)^{-1}$	μ -strongly monotone	μ -strongly convex L -smooth
Cayley $C_A = 2(I + A)^{-1} - I$	μ -strongly monotone L -Lipschitz	μ -strongly convex L -smooth
faster convergence		

Key to contractions: strong monotonicity/convexity

Operator theory

Today, we learned to:

- **Use** conjugate functions to define duality
- **Define** monotone and cocoercive operators and their relations
- **Relate** subdifferential operator and monotonicity
- **Recognize** monotone operators in optimization problems
- **Apply** operators in algorithms: forward step, resolvent, Cayley
- **Understand requirements** for building contractions

Next lecture

- Operator splitting algorithms