Functional Abstraction and Polymorphism

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Review

- Slides for Lecture 7 have been cleaned up. Check them out.
- Review hand evaluation rule for `local`

Abstracting Designs

- "The elimination of repetitions is the most important step in the (program) editing process" – Textbook

- The software engineering term for revising a program to make it better or accommodate an extension: *refactoring*.

- Repeated code should be avoided at almost all costs. Why? Revisions involved repeated code are almost impossible to get right.

- *Abstractions* help us avoid this problem.

The Need for Abstractions

```
;; contains-doll? : los  ->  boolean
;; (contains-doll? alos) determines whether alos
;;   contains the symbol 'doll
(define (contains-doll? alos)
  (cond
    [(empty? alos) false]
    [else (or (symbol=? (first alos) 'doll)
              (contains-doll? (rest alos)))]))
```

The Need for Abstractions

```
;; contains-car? : los  ->  boolean
;; (contains-car? Alos) determines whether
;;   alos contains the symbol 'car
(define (contains-car? alos)
  (cond
    [(empty? alos) false]
    [else (or (symbol=? (first alos) 'car)
              (contains-car? (rest alos)))]))
```

Creating Abstractions

How can we write one function that replaces

- **contains-doll?**
- **contains-car?**
- **contains-pizza?**
- **contains-comp210?**

Creating Abstractions

```
;; contains? : symbol, los  ->  boolean
;; (contains? s alos) determines whether alos
;; contains the symbol s
(define (contains? s alos)
  (cond
    [(empty? alos) false]
    [else (or (symbol=? (first alos) s)
              (contains? s (rest alos)))]))
```

Can We Do Better?

```
;; contains? : any list-of-any -> boolean
;; (contains? v aloa) determines whether
;;    aloa contains the value v
(define (contains? v aloa)
  (cond
    [(empty? aloa) false]
    [else (or (equals? (first aloa) v)
              (contains? v (rest aloa)))]))
```

Using Abstractions

- How do we use `contains?`

  ```
  (contains? 'doll (list ...))
  (contains? 'car  (list ...))
  ```

- How can we better define `contains-doll?`, `contains-car?`

  ```
  (define (contains-doll? alos) (contains? 'doll alos))
    (define (contains-car? alos) (contains? 'car alos))
  ```

- This idea is called **reuse**. Let's run with it!

A more complex example

```
;; below : lon number  ->  lon
;; (below alon n) returns the list containing the
;; numbers in alon that are less than or equal to n
(define (below alon t)
  (cond [(empty? alon) empty]
        [else
          (cond [(<= (first alon) t)
                  (cons (first alon)
                        (below (rest alon) t))]
                [else (below (rest alon) t)])]))
```

A more complex example

```
;; above : lon number  ->  lon
;; (above alon n) returns the list of the numbers
;; in alon that are greater than t
(define (above alon t)
  (cond [(empty? alon) empty]
        [else
           (cond [(> (first alon) t)
                    (cons (first alon)
                          (above (rest alon) t))]
                 [else (above (rest alon) t)])]))
```

Creating Abstractions

How can we write one function that replaces

- **below**
- **above**
- **equal**
- **same-sign-as**
- … ?

Creating Abstractions cont.

```
;; filter1 : relOp lon number  ->  lon
;; (filter1 test alon n) returns the list of the numbers t
;;    in alon such that (test t n) is true
(define (filter1 test alon t)
  (cond [(empty? alon) empty]
        [else
          (cond [(test (first alon) t)
                   (cons (first alon)
                        (filter1 test (rest alon) t))]
                [else (filter1 test (rest alon) t)])]))
```

What did we do? Use a function as an argument!
relOp abbreviates *relational operator.* Requires the
Intermediate language level.

Using Abstractions

- How do we denote (express) function values? In three different ways. We will use the simpler one for now: write the name of a defined function (primitive, library, or program-defined):

```
(filter1 <= (list ...) 17))
(filter1 > (list ...) 17))
```

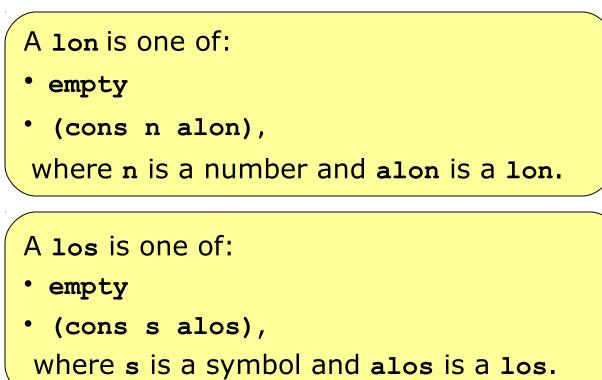How can we define functions **below** and **above** without code duplication?

```
(define (below alon t) (filter1 <= alon t))
(define (above alon t) (filter1 > alon t))
```
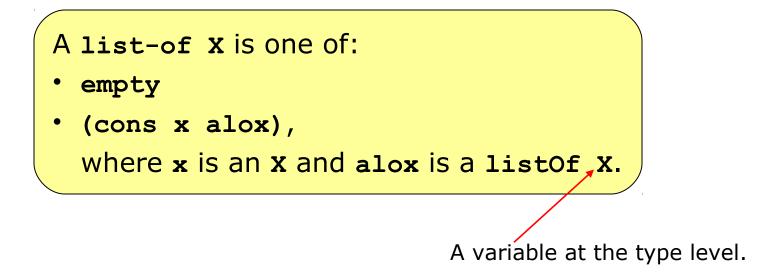
- Both functions will work just as before!

Repetition in Types

Repetition also happens in type definitions.

A `lon` is one of:

- `empty`

- `(cons n alon)`,

where `n` is a number and `alon` is a `lon`.

A `los` is one of:

- `empty`

- `(cons s alos)`,

where `s` is a symbol and `alos` is a `los`.

Abstracting Types

A **list-of X** is one of:

- **empty**

- **(cons x alox)**,

  where **x** is an **X** and **alox** is a **listOf X**.

A variable at the type level.

In FP, called parametric polymorphism
In OOP, called genericity (generic types)

Abstracting Types

Type	Example(s)
`list-of number`	`(list 1 2 3)`
`list-of symbol`	`(list 'a 'b 'pizza)`

`any`	`(list 1 2 3)`
	`(list 'a 'b 'pizza)`
	`empty`
	`(list 1 'a +)`

Important! `list-of X` is NOT `list-of any`

Revisiting `filter1`

What is a more precise description of `test`'s type?

```
;; filter1 : relOp (list-of number) number →
;;    (listOf number)
;; where relOp is (number number -> boolean)
;; (filter1 r alon n) returns the list of numbers
;; t from alon such that (r t n) is true
```

Revisiting `filter1`

Can we generalize the type of filter1?

```
;; filter1 :
;;   (number number -> boolean) (list-of number) number ->
;;   (listOf number)
```

What is special about **number**? Does filter1 rely on any of the properties of **number**?

No. It could be any type **X**.

```
;; filter1 : (X X -> boolean) (list-of X) X -> (list-of X)
```

A better form of filtering?

Claim: `filter1` is unnecessarily complex and specialized. Compare it with the following function (which is part of the Scheme library).

```
;; filter (X -> boolean) (listOf X) -> listOf X
;; (filter p alox) returns the list of elements e
;;    in alox that satisfy the predicate p.
```

Note that p is unary, which means that we must pass matching unary functions as arguments. This convention is inconvenient in the absence of a new linguistic mechanism called lambda-notation which is introduced in Lecture 9. This mechanism is available in the "Intermediate student with lambda" language.

Final thoughts

- Function abstraction adds **expressiveness** to the programming language

- Type abstraction (polymorphism) does the same for type annotations

- They work well together, *e.g.* OCAML, Haskell.

- Programming will continue to get "easier" as we add abstraction mechanisms to our languages.

For Next Class

- Get started on HW3 (which inclues a *real* challenge problem).

- Reading:

  Chs. 19,20: Linguistic Abstraction, Functions as values